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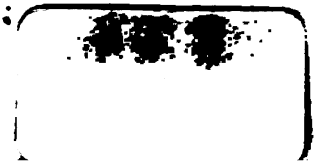

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MARTHA.

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MARTHA:

A

MEMORIAL OF AN ONLY AND BELOVED

SISTER.

BY ANDREW REED,

Author of "No Fiction; a Narrative founded on Fact."

Very pleasant hast thou been unto me!

DAVID.

And yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of thee in heaven!

MILTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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Printed for

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2 Vols.

PREFACE.

WHEN the subject of the following Memoir was removed from all earthly intercourse, it became unconsciously the purpose of the writer, as soon as his mind could come to the employ, and before any of the lighter passages in the history should be lost, to bring together whatever might best illustrate her estimable character. Such a record seemed necessary to himself, since he could not allow any thing valuable to fade from his memory, connected with a name so sacred

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to his thoughts; and it appeared desirable for his children, as he hoped it might supply them in future time with a fine example of excellence, and a strong relative motive to copy it into their lives and deportment.

If it is asked, why the original purpose is now carried out into an act of *publication*? the author acknowledges, that he has been influenced in coming to this decision, generally, by the opinion of those on whose opinion he can well rely; and, especially, by the hope, that it might contribute to accomplish more extensively the earnest and latest desire of his beloved relation. Without the most distant anticipation of the measure now adopted, it was particularly her prayer, *that her death might be*

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made useful; and in fervently seeking to give the fullest effect to her devout wishes, he knew not of any means better suited to the object, than placing under the eye of others a correct delineation of her character

Let it be understood, however, that the history is entirely of a *domestic class.* The author has no splendid incidents, no improbable reverses, no extraordinary circumstances to excite curiosity and hold attention. The life he records, if interesting at all, must be so, not from its dissimilarity, but from its resemblance, to our own; the occurrences which vary it are of that simple and sober kind, that they abound in our daily enjoyments, and are familiar to our common existence. The

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same observation should be applied to the character he would describe. It is not intellectual so much as *moral;* and if intellectual, the mental endowments are only such as are ordinary and general, while they are successfully directed to high and extraordinary *moral* attainments.

If these explanations are given to prevent disappointment, the writer does not state them as disadvantages. They are rather, he conceives, favourable to his design. His Memoir may not make so deep an impression, but it may make a *better* one. Were it his duty to record the most striking incidents, he might well fear, lest, in the excitation and development of an intricate story, the lessons inseparable from it should be neglected. Were

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he about to fix the eye on the brilliancy of mental powers of unusual magnitude, he might suspect, that his reader would be content to admire what he despaired to imitate. But as there is nothing to captivate the thoughts from the chief object, as there is nothing *extraordinary* but what is *attainable*, he would hope that the reader will readily feel, that what the deceased became, he may be; and that, if he is not, it will be, not his fate, but his *fault*.

The author was convinced, that in pourtraying such a life, it would be utterly useless merely to make a chronological record of events and actions, or even to do no more than faithfully describe the leading features of character. He has

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been concerned to subordinate dates and occurrences to their moral effect; to trace the influence of circumstances on the passions and the judgment; to show, not only what the individual became, but to mark, step by step, the way in which she reached her spiritual elevation. And this object was not to be effected by a hasty sketch, or a few powerful strokes of the pencil. Patient exertion was indispensable. There must be stroke upon stroke, line upon line, touch upon touch, to reach progressively the full expression of a character at once energetic and delicate.

In fulfilling his design, it was unavoidable that allusion should be made to living names, and especially to the members of his family. He hopes, how-

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ever, that, though he has not written with the eye of the public upon him, he has in no case exceeded the limits of propriety. He can sincerely say, he has always made such reference with reluctance, and never except where it appeared necessary to put the subject of his Memoir in interesting and useful lights. Had he taken more liberty in this way, the narrative would certainly have approached nearer to what he desired to render it. After this statement, he is ready to believe every candid mind will justify his intentions, even if it should be thought, in the fulness of the heart, more has been said than is meet.

He now commits his little work to the hands of those with whom he has found favour beyond his highest expectations;

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anxiously breathing at the footsool of Him, who has all hearts in his disposal, the prayer of his relative — *that He would render her life and her death useful—eminently useful.* Particularly he commends it to the kindly notice of those who are of the same sex and similar age. Their character is *soon* formed. Much depends on *how* it is formed. Woman, like the snow from heaven, is the fairest thing we know when fair; the foulest when debased and polluted.

MARTHA.

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MARTHA.

CHAPTER I.

INFANCY. 1793—1800.

READER;

Permit the writer to detain your attention one moment. He is unwilling that your eye should pass to the ensuing narrative with the indifference of a stranger, or the cold curiosity of a critic. He is about to introduce you, more or less, to a retired domestic circle, and especially to an acquaintance with one of its members, with whom he is disposed to think you cannot have communion with-

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out being made the wiser and the happier. In thus welcoming you as an inmate of his humble family, and placing before you whatever in the character and life of a beloved relative may contribute to gratify or to benefit, he affords a sincere pledge of his friendship; and, in return, he anxiously solicits the exercise of a kindly sympathy and reposing confidence. Perhaps you possessed a treasure as dear to you as his, and have lost it; or perhaps you still hold such a one, and tremble at the idea of its removal; in either case, the sympathy he desires will already have existence. And though, by a mere possibility, neither circumstance may apply to you, the pleadings of our common humanity will be, he would think, too powerful to withhold confidence where confidence is given, or to disrespect those sufferings which sooner or later "all flesh is heir to." In this assurance, then, he will pour his words as into the ear of a friend, expecting friendship for friendship, joy for joy, and tear for tear.

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My dear sister was born on the 2nd of June, 1793, and named Martha, after the late Mrs. Hamilton, of Brighton; a lady endeared to my mother by the intimacies of a lengthened friendship; and who was so happy in conciliating general opinion, that her friends were accustomed to say, by a forced application of Scripture, she was obnoxious to that woe which is expressed against those who are followed by the voice of universal approbation.

At this time, I was somewhat more than five years of age; and was well prepared to receive my new relation with open arms of love. I had, about a twelvemonth previously, lost an infant brother, who had been so repeatedly talked of by my parents, in terms of tenderness and regret, that I felt as if I had lost every thing in losing him. When, therefore, "a little sister" was announced to me, I seemed restored to a world of happiness; and I was most earnest in begging to see and possess my undefined treasure.

At length I was told that my prayer

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was granted—that I was to see my sister —an assurance capable of producing such powerful emotions as subsided in an impression of the event, which my memory still retains, and will ever retain. The very attempt to record it brings it to my mind with a vividness and a force, which for many years I have not realized. I am carried back to an apartment familiar to my days of childhood. I appear to see the door open, and the nurse enter with her tender charge resting on her bosom. I follow her to her seat, and take my place at her knees, impatient to behold an object of which I had I know not what conceptions. What sensations I felt as the nurse prepared to unfold the delicate coverings in which it was wrapped! With what a full heart of satisfaction I first looked on its half-hidden face! How I trembled as I pressed the soft and unresisting flesh of its little arm!

The earliest impressions which I remember to have received from my sister's own conduct, were entirely favourable to those I had derived from her birth, and

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are connected with the second and third year of her life. About this time, our parents judged it necessary, for the preservation of our health, to remove us from their habitation, which was in the confined neighbourhood of Temple-bar, before the adoption of the recent improvements. We were, therefore, placed at Highgate, under the care of a nurse; who, like most of her class, was notable, industrious, and attentive to the outward wants and comforts of her children; but who, with intervening fits of fondness, was really sharp-tempered; and who, whether kind or severe, was never prepared to exercise, what children most need, and in the end most desire, *impartial justice*. Her treatment was never the fruit of reflection on the different characters and tempers of children; it sprang from the caprice of the moment, or from the settled preferences of a selfish attachment.

It happened, from whatever cause, that my sister succeeded in gaining the partialities of this good woman; and, of course, I lost them. I was not long in

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painfully ascertaining the extent of my loss. We were constantly put in opposition to each other. She was "the good girl," and I was "the troublesome, mischievous boy." I was sometimes corrected on her account, when my heart told me I was not in fault; and she was caressed unduly, that I might feel more the bitterness of neglect. I was uniformly made subservient to her; if she cried, I was forced to amuse her; if she desired my toys, I was obliged to surrender them; if any thing was to be enjoyed, she was to be first and chiefly consulted; till I was in danger of concluding, that in order to make her happy, it was necessary to render me miserable.

To those who are interested in the education of children, it will at once appear, that our moral dispositions were placed, at this early period, in a perilous state of trial. I had, hitherto, considered my sister as a part of my happiness, as an enlargement of myself; and my enjoyments, of whatever kind, had seldom yielded me their full amount of pleasure, unless she

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was made, as she could, to participate. But, now, the thoughtless conduct of our nurse awakened within me passions of which I had not been conscious. I was disposed to look on my sister's gratifications with jealousy, as they usually robbed me of mine. Her interests and mine appeared not only separate, but contrary. I felt uneasy in the society of her I loved above all human beings; and to avoid rebukes, and sacrifices, and humiliations, I was inclined, though reluctantly, to avoid her.

Happily, my sister seemed more prepared to meet this little crisis in our infantile friendship than myself. On a temper more vain, or more selfish, it might undoubtedly have produced the most baneful effects; but her affection supplied her already with a weapon to resist and subdue them. My previous fondness towards her had sunk into her susceptible heart; and as soon as she perceived that her pleasures were to be purchased at the price of my comfort, she began to hesitate in demanding them. Nothing the nurse could

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do to gratify her at my expense would secure her approbation, or influence her to abandon her brother in sorrow and disgrace. She would often restore the toy which, at her own hasty request, had been too rudely snatched away; she would take her little stool, and seat herself quietly by me when I was in distress, and refused to be comforted unless I was to be comforted likewise; she would gaze on my face, and, throwing her arms round my neck, would kiss away the tear which hung on my cheek; she would boldly plead my cause against her friend and my judge; and insist again and again with her sweet lisping tongue (I think I hear it now!) that I was a *good boy*. In these generous exercises, she preserved my affection and strengthened her own; and though it was very undesirable that so early our loves should be thus exposed to trial, certainly it ended in mutual advantage.

The eye of a parent is remarkably searching. There was nothing in the treatment we received which a general observer would not have approved; nothing

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of which our parents could decidedly complain; yet there was enough to cherish uneasiness and dissatisfaction. There was not that appearance of content, and cheerfulness, and unconstrained familiarity, which they had been accustomed to see in us. The uneasiness of the child was quickly communicated to the heart of the parent. Confidence in our nurse was shaken; and we were restored to the society of our natural and best protectors.

When Martha was about five years of age, it was again found desirable to afford us the advantage of a freer and purer air. We were, therefore, situated with a friend at Mitcham in Surrey, with whom, excepting some intervals in the winter seasons, we continued for a considerable time. I have a distinct remembrance of the days that passed over us at this place; childhood can have few to boast of happier than they.

We were no longer in circumstances to tempt the bad passions into exercise. The hours not engaged by the duties of our

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separate schools, were spent together; we were nearly each other's sole companions. Martha naturally looked to me as her brother and senior. She thought herself safe in my protection, and aspired to partake of my more robust amusements. With me she spun the top, trundled the hoop, and taught the kite to fly on the wings of the wind. With me she chased the butterfly, surmounted the style and hedge, and wandered from corn field to corn field, collecting gay flowers; and at last returning home, each other's king and queen, crowned with the garlands our busy fingers had weaved.

Fancy, too, had her reign; and active pursuits would be resigned for those which were more pensive. When the summer shower has been falling, we have sat gazing up into heaven till we thought we saw it sprinkled from the hands of angels, and have run out to the garden that it might fall on us. Often have we sat beneath the elm-trees, while the glorious sun was setting, imagining his rays, broken as they were by the branches and foliage, to be a

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thousand separate stars, and amused ourselves in a vain attempt to number them. We have wandered far from home; and penetrating the copse-wood, and burying ourselves in the leaves, have represented the babes in the wood, till we reproached the birds for not bringing us blackberries. We have made to ourselves wings, and flown to every part of the earth with which we had any acquaintance; we travelled to the edge of the world (which we could never think of but as a plain), and have shuddered to look down into nothing. We have told over again the tales of the nursery, and have invented, if possible, many things more marvellous.

What joys have been ours in the midst of these childish engagements! Free from care and from fear, we desired nothing, we regretted nothing. We were a little world to ourselves, and were happy in mutual possession. We forgot "all that was before or after," in the plenitude of enjoyment the present moment bestowed.

It may readily be supposed, that this entire community of thought, occupation,

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and amusement, was of advantage to us both. Separate from its opening to us a fund of pleasure for the passing time, it placed us in the most attractive lights to each other. It gave us each an object to love; and furnished, however unconsciously, the opportunity and means of establishing our affection.

What was the full amount of benefit arising to my sister from this intercourse, must be inferred from her general history, rather than from any particular illustrations; of the benefits derived from her character and attachment to myself, I think I can speak with greater precision. How high soever the gratifications we found in our innocent, healthful, and sometimes pensive amusements, I am conscious of having possessed a higher and deeper source of pleasure in my love of her. Frequently in the very hey-day of my enjoyments, I have involuntarily paused to gaze on her with a heart full of sweet sentiments. Memory still supplies me with the image of what she then was. Her lively and affectionate blue eyes, her rosy and smiling

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cheeks, her open and fair countenance, her golden locks resting on her shoulders—her whole form, ornamented with the white frock and streaming broad sash, such as I have seen it tripping over the green, or reposing in the shadow of a tree, is still before me!

I can imagine, likewise, that her greater susceptibility, arising partly from her character, and partly from her sex, was equally advantageous. The boy, who associates only with boys, is in danger of becoming cruel and obstreperous. The mother and the sister are wisely prepared to soften and restrain the manly propensities from running into vicious excess. This influence is rather uniform than striking—rather effectual than palpable; but as my memory supplies me with an instance, which may assist me in throwing out the character I am seeking to delineate, I do not scruple to record it.

I was not long mixed with the schoolboys of a country village, before I acquired a taste for birds-nesting; a taste in the mind of an active and inquisitive boy, re-

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markably keen and powerful. At first, I did not think of rifling the nest; the discovery of an object so artfully concealed was abundant gratification; afterwards, the eggs so beautifully coloured and marked, became an overpowering temptation; while I satisfied myself in this trespass, by vowing I would never commit the greater offence of disturbing a nest of young and helpless birds. When I had advanced so far, I was anxious to divide this pursuit, as I did every other, with my sister; but I could never succeed. Her discountenance made me think, and whenever I thought about it, I felt it was a needless cruelty.

It happened, however, in one of our rambles, that my eye fell upon a nest without seeking it. There were several young ones in it. I thought of nothing but showing them to my sister. I seized the nest, scrambled down through the bushes, and held it before her. She was not pleased, as I expected; she could not help admiring them; but the tear stood in her eyes; she blamed me, and

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entreated me to restore them. I assured her, as I believed, that the parent birds would never return to them; and that it would be cruel to expose them to starve. We, therefore, carried them home, determined to do our very best for their preservation. But, the little creatures were now dependant on skilless, though kind protectors. They languished and died; but her distress and her kindness, through this little event, made one of those deep impressions on my heart, which contribute so largely to the formation of character; and which, could they be often traced, would be found frequently to arise from occurrences equally trivial. To her

"Whose heart, from cruel sport estranged, would bleed
To work the woe of any living thing."

I probably owe it, that, at this moment, I cannot willingly set my foot upon a worm, nor rob a harmless bird of its life or of its liberty.

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CHAPTER II.

EDUCATION. 1793—1803.

It was the inestimable privilege of my sister to be the offspring of considerate and pious parents. If they rejoiced at her birth in receiving another pledge of the Divine mercy, they trembled also under the reflection, that another immortal spirit was committed to their charge for which they were to be responsible. This conviction mixed sobriety with their gladness, and prayer with their hopes.

No sooner had the anguish of the mother, the excitement of the father, passed away, than their infant child was, with prayers and thanksgiving, dedicated to the Being who gave it. Without any unnecessary loss of time, this act of dedication was renewed and confirmed in the solemn ordinance of baptism, adoring, as they did, the Father of every good and

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perfect gift for an institution which recognized them in their *parental relationships*; and earnestly imploring that the appointed and visible seal of the covenant might be accompanied by its rich and invisible grace. These prayers were a thousand and a thousand times repeated in the regular exercises of the closet, the family, and the sanctuary; nor was this always found sufficient for the anxieties and tenderness of a pious parent. I can well remember, on several occasions, seeing my father walk the room with his beloved daughter lying in his arms. I have marked his lifted eye, his moving lips, and his more measured tread. Child as I was, they told me that he was in prayer. I recollect nothing at this period that gave me such an elevated idea of my father's goodness as this act, performed, as he evidently thought it was, without a witness. Thus was he commending one child to the blessing of heaven, and opening the passages to the heart of another for the blessing he had already so often solicited!

Martha's parents were honest in their

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prayers, and unsophisticated in their religious views; to pray and to act with them, therefore, if not the same, were yet inseparable things. They believed, with Bishop Sanderson (it is the creed of common sense) that prayer without exertion is presumption, and that exertion without prayer is Atheism; and they resolved to adopt the best means to realize their own devout desires.

The routine of school education they were obliged to trust in other hands; but they spared neither inquiry nor expense in securing for so important a trust, hands that were most worthy. It was a family maxim —often repeated that it might never be broken—that a good education was a fortune a child could never spend, and a parent could always bestow. Filial gratitude is powerfully excited in recalling the many sacrifices and determined self-denial that were necessary in doing justice to this maxim; a maxim which had descended from my maternal grandfather, the only shred by which his name now fastens to my memory. So does the very record of

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man hasten to decay! And so may one wise and practical saying arrest it in its course to oblivion, and render it a blessing to posterity!

By obtaining assistance for one branch of education, our parents did not consider themselves relieved from that responsibility which nature and nature's God imposed upon them. A general superintendance of our entire education, and an especial regard to our moral and religious instruction, were duties which they felt they could not, and would not if they could, have transferred to others. With hands so full as their's, and with their children so frequently removed from their care, even these duties were very difficult of performance; but a ready mind was their's, and it is surprising what this may accomplish. This is not the mind which refuses to do any thing, because it cannot do all it desires; it is the mind that does at once, and cheerfully, what it can; and which was honoured by the commendation of incarnate Wisdom.

To do well under many disadvantages

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what it is not easy to do in most favourable circumstances, is an achievement which invites inquiry, and promises to reward it. I shall, therefore, indulge in a few brief observations on the course pursued by our excellent parents, so far as my memory will assist to retrace it, and they shall be found relevant to the present design.

It was a rule with them *to begin early*. My sister, I am persuaded, could not recur to the time when first religion was presented to her notice. From the cradle she was taught to lift her hands in prayer, and behave with seriousness in the house of God; and from a child she was made to know the Holy Scriptures. Our parents knew how soon soever they attempted to occupy the heart with the good seed of the kingdom, they should find it pre-occupied by an enemy who scattereth tares. They revered the sacredness and mysteries of religion, but they saw nothing in these which forbade them to explain divine truth to the infant mind. They did not urge their children into those depths where the

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elephant may swim; they led them to those shallows where the lamb may stand and drink, and be refreshed. They rejoiced in that Goodness which had supplied a food on which, like the manna of the wilderness, the infant might thrive, and the man be invigorated. They admired that Wisdom which had made truth familiar to us by narrative, by parable, and by fable; which had even embodied and *brought it near* to us in the humanity of the Saviour; so that the understanding and the heart, in their feeblest state, might be interested. They were concerned to imitate this condescension; and no one can judge how easily they succeeded but by making the experiment.

Our parents *always dwelt on a few governing principles in our education.* It is readily admitted that they had not those comprehensive views of education which are now happily possessed by most intelligent parents of the same class. But if their plans had less of philosophy in them, they had more of religion; if they described a smaller circle, they described it

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the oftener; and, after all, RELIGION AND REPETITION are the soul of education. Of religious truths they chose the simplest and most influential. It was their effort to bring their children at once into communion with their Maker. The existence, the justice, the goodness, and the presence of the Divine Being, as they bear upon our circumstances of weakness, guilt, and temptation; and as they provide for us abundant salvation, were the sentiments on which they insisted, and by which they sought to enlighten the mind, impress the conscience, and govern the conduct. They thus prepared a good foundation on which to build; and if they did not raise the superstructure so high, nor throw around it so much of ornament as might be desirable, they succeeded infinitely better than those who, with unmeasured pains and skill, trust to social claims, worldly prudence, and metaphysical theory, for the formation of character. The one builds rudely perhaps—but it is upon a rock; the other builds magnificently — but it is upon sand!

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They were also remarkable for *seizing all occasions to carry forward the work of education.* This arose partly from their limited opportunities; knowing them to be few, they were eager to embrace them all; and partly, from having minds always awake to the importance of religion and the welfare of their children. They did not indeed moralize, and task their children to wearisomeness; nor did they so mingle serious things with worldly intercourse, as to soil their purity; but they employed the present emotion, and the passing event, to make a lasting and good impression. The conduct of others, the pains and wants of the body, the comforts and vexations of life, with endless other circumstances, were used, as they were under the attention of their children, to give and to fix the moral or pious lesson on the heart.

To parents so circumstanced, the *Sabbath* is of unspeakable value; and, in this instance, the opportunities it afforded were well appreciated and employed. The whole family welcomed its arrival and regretted its departure. It was a day that

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yielded more of rest, and of comfort, and of domestic intercourse and affection, than any other; and about our parents there was an alacrity and cheerfulness in meeting its duties, which induced us to think there was a charm in them, when we were not otherwise sensible of it. My mind returns to few things in childhood with more pleasure than many of the sabbath evenings of that period, which Martha and myself commonly spent with our father.

At these seasons we were required to repeat what we could remember of the public services; we then went through our catechetical exercises; and at the end of these we generally took our places, my sister on the lap, and myself between the knees of our beloved parent. His countenance, naturally grave, would wear a serene smile; and he would enter into familiar conversation with us, answering our questions or proposing his own. We then chose a hymn, and he sang it with us; we thought no one could sing so sweetly. Afterwards he would caress us, and smile upon us, and frequently he

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would close, by pressing us nearer to his side, and saying, with a feeling we could not then understand, "God Almighty bless ye, my children!" By this time, our mother usually joined us. We talked and sang afresh. It was an hour of gladness. Our parents embraced us, and we embraced each other. At such a moment there was but one thing that could heighten our joy. It was simply to hear our father say, as he often said, "Well, my dear, I should like the children to stay up and sup with us to-night." If these words were uttered, whose parents were so good as ours! or what children so happy!

It would be needless to add, did not its pre-eminent importance require it to be placed in a prominent light, that *they were concerned to sustain all their instructions by their own example.* Children are astonishingly quick in observing how far their teachers are influenced by the lessons they give. It is in vain that we point them to an upward, narrow, and forbidding path, if we are walking in a broad, flowery, and fascinating one; it is in vain that we en-

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force the necessity of humility and self-denial, if we are slaves to sense and selfishness. They will see through the hypocrisy, and are in danger, in their turn, of becoming either hypocrites or infidels.

Our parents exposed their children to no such perils. They did not attempt to worship God and Mammon. They did not mix up with the sabbath worldly pleasures and vain conversation, and then expect their children to "remember to keep it holy." They did not treat the name and character of the minister with levity or rudeness, and then wonder that their children were not impressed by his ministrations. They did not lend their tongues to plead for a religion of humility and charity, while they cherished in their hearts, envy, hatred, and pride. No; they were sincere and decided in their profession. They renounced from their hearts, what it was right their children should renounce; and pursued with their might what they exhorted them to pursue. They pointed to heaven, and led the way. In their busiest pursuit of worldly things,

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it was apparent that they were animated by dearer hopes than earth could either inspire or gratify.

It will readily be concluded, that such prayers, such exertions, and such example could not have been without their influence; it now remains to ascertain the amount and character of this influence on the mind of my sister, while yet a child.

At this early period she was remarkable for *an enlightened state of the conscience.* She was quick to mark vice and inconsistency; and in the earlier part of her childhood, while to feel and to speak were the same thing, she would at once express herself to the offending party: so that the swearer and sabbath breaker have been confused by her reproof. Her conscience was active when it could not decide on the presence of evil; and in noticing those dubious actions which she had too much light to approve, and too little to condemn, she would be constantly applying to her parents with the questions—Is that right? Is he a good man? Can he love God?

Her conscience was equally faithful

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with herself; she would easily detect her faults, and in most cases acknowledge them with great ingenuousness of disposition. On one occasion, the servant who was intrusted with taking her to chapel, resolved to give the time to pleasure; she amused and treated Martha till she thought her more than reconciled to the act of disobedience; but the first sight of her mother revived the subdued sense of wrong, and much to the servant's vexation, she ran to her lap, burst into tears, and told every thing that had occurred, taking to herself a full share of the offence.

What is of yet greater consequence, she was thus early in the habit of confessing her faults in private and voluntary prayer. Prayer was certainly less irksome to her than to most children, and it became indispensable to her peace, when her conscience reproached her with having done wrong. In a letter which I possess, afterward written to some children, she states, that when she was "a very little girl," if she had committed any fault, she used to confess it to God, and pray that she

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might be made sorry for it, and do it no more.

Martha had, at this period, a vivid sense of the *Divine Omnipresence.* This impression was likely to be made by her general religious instruction; but I ascribe its clearness and power to one of those happy and beneficial Sabbath evening exercises which have been already noticed. Our father generally confined his conversations to one subject, that our attention might not be dissipated; and, on this evening, he chose the universal presence of Deity. He read to us the 139th Psalm. He explained and enforced it in its practical tendencies. Afterwards we sung a part of it in the version of Dr. Watts. We were much interested. We proposed many curious questions on a subject so incomprehensible; but our anxious instructor gave them all a practical direction. Martha was particularly affected; and the impression remained on her. She committed the Psalm to memory; and she was constantly making allusion to its prevailing sentiment; she would sometimes name

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it as a consolation to her parents; and a considerable time after she had received the impression, she employed it to reprove me. I was hastened to bed, and had forgotten to say my prayers; she told me of the omission, and admonished me by adding, —"Remember, brother, God sees you!"

I cannot but think that this sentiment thus deeply fixed in her mind, exerted a great moral power on her conduct; that it delivered her from the meanness of hypocrisy, and many other temptations incident to childhood. I would not venture to say that, as a child, she was free from deceit, falsehood, or pilfering; but undoubtedly she was superior in these respects to most children I have known; and to what can this with such propriety be referred as to the conviction, that she was not acting merely in the presence of beings on whose ignorance or credulity she could often impose, but under the eye of a Being who saw every thing, who saw it as it really was, and with whom, therefore, it was as foolish as it was wicked to attempt deception?

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Nothing, however, seemed more uniformly to attract her regard, than the display of the *Divine goodness*. On these her parents frequently discoursed; and on these, a temper so susceptible and generous as her's was likely to dwell with particular pleasure. This goodness, as it is familiarized to the tenderest mind in the incarnation and history of the Saviour, was most engaging. She preferred this record of infinite compassion to all other books, and to all other parts of the Bible. She would prevail with me to read portions of it to her, and more frequently peruse them intently herself; and it was seldom done without an expression of sympathy, either by the tear that started into her eye, or the admiring exclamation "How good he was, brother! How good he was!"

So fully, at times, did these sentiments possess her, that she was not seldom employed in attempting to make others as happy with them as she felt herself to be. I remember to have been present when she had a little party of friends, and when she could not have been more than eight years

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of age. Not of my sex nor age, I was amongst them rather as an idle boy, than as a playfellow. When they were somewhat fatigued, and my sister was at a loss to present them with fresh amusement, she sat down in the midst of them, and spontaneously began talking about the goodness of Jesus Christ; she touched on the most prominent events in his life, with such simplicity and animation of countenance, as interested all her visitors, and her brother likewise; and the remainder of the evening was spent in singing those hymns, and talking of those characters in scripture history, which are usually favourites with children. I introduce this trifling incident, merely to show how the subject occupied her youthful thoughts; and it may well be supposed that they would impart tenderness and elevation to a mind already so susceptible.

Let it not be concluded, that, in thus illustrating the effects of religious instruction on my sisters opening life, I am claiming for her the unquestionable evidences of genuine piety. Piety can as-

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suredly be known to us only by settled and tried character; these cannot be the growth of childhood; favourable symptoms at this period should therefore be entertained, with gratitude and hope indeed, but still with caution. I have traced them as the legitimate fruits of an education, which, whatever may have been its deficiencies, was begun, and continued, and ended in the fear of God; of an education which respected principles more than accomplishments, and a future life more than the present.

Nor must I bring the sketch to a close without observing, that this course of education brought as many benefits to the parent as to the child. Like all other children, Martha gave her parents occasional concern; but the tenor of her mind was marked by confidence, affection, and obedience. They are persuaded that, though naturally amiable, nothing produced this equally with the religious character of their instructions. They insisted on love and obedience as *due to God*, and this included all that was due to them-

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selves. Had they selfishly enforced only the lesser duties, they might have realised neither; but have gone down to the grave in sorrow. They honoured the God they served, and He honoured them. They have passed through many trials, but they have not had the bitterness of beholding any one of their children turning aside from a religious profession to the paths of vice and folly. And, now, that they are "old and grey headed," and are "as those who watch for the coming of their Lord," I have it in charge from them to state, as their matured conviction, that if the means used for the religious benefit of our children do ultimately fail, it must generally arise, either from want of skill or fidelity; for He is true who has said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

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CHAPTER III

IMPRESSIONS. 1803—1809.

THE constitution of society, like the waters of a river, is constantly varying; and all its variations are marked by the bestowment and recession of peculiar advantages. Whatever may be the improvements of the present period, certainly we have gained nothing in our domestic attachments. Relative affection is the fruit of familiar and long continued intercourse; but now, either from custom or necessity, it too commonly happens, that the parent and the child, the brother and the sister, see little of each other during a season in which the heart is most alive to sympathy, and in which, if the seeds of love are not sown, they will either not spring up at all, or afford a late and sickly plant, neither lovely nor serviceable. Hence we have so little of fraternal attachment and filial devotion; so poor a remembrance of

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the natal days and principal events of a family; so few of those domestic meetings which, once in the year at least, brought all the relatives together from the venerable grandsire down to the rosy babe of the third generation; and which, by anticipation or review, shed something of their gladness and exhilaration on all the intervening periods of life.

I allude to this change the more feelingly, because, at this moment, I am sensible of having suffered by it. Our parents had succeeded, against many forbidding circumstances, to keep my sister and myself mostly together during the earlier part of childhood, and had thus knit our hearts together in love; now, however, our separation, more or less for some years, was inevitable. I was, therefore, deprived of opportunity to observe the progress of her character, as I was becoming more fit for the work; and must be content to reduce a considerable term in her brief life within narrow limits, when otherwise it might have furnished lengthened and profitable detail.

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Prior to this date, our family had removed to Chiswell Street, Finsbury Square; and as the situation was more open, our parents determined to keep the younger children beneath their eye. Martha, therefore, enjoyed their care and society for several years without interruption, and they enjoyed in her all the satisfaction which an affectionate and improving child can bestow. At the same time, her education was committed to a lady, who, not content with imparting the ordinary instructions, watched sedulously over the religious welfare of her pupils. Under such circumstances, it is supposing the least to say, that Martha's sympathies towards the objects by which they had been awakened, did not diminish. More than this I might perhaps say from my own observation, as I still had occasional opportunities of intercourse with her, and was concerned to make a serious use of them; becoming as I was, at this period, interested in the things of an invisible world more than I had previously been.

Some of the children in the school to

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which Martha was now attached, were in the habit of attending a catechetical exercise, conducted by Mr. John Scott, a gentleman well known as a blameless elder of the Tabernacle, and a partner in the firm of a respectable Banking-house in the city, but still better known and loved as the kind and devoted friend of children. They were eager in pressing Martha to join them in their attendance on this condescending instructor; and Martha was as eager in applying to her parents for permission so to do. Always desirous of promoting by any means the spiritual benefit of their child, and having no similar exercise in the churches to which they respectively belonged, they readily met her request, and lost no time in procuring for her a necessary introduction.

My sister was now twelve years of age; and the period requires to be marked, as it is associated with some strong and abiding impressions. The lessons to which she had often attended were enforced by a new voice, clothed with happy illustrations, and commended by manners both

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serious and gentle; and they made a fuller and deeper entry into her mind. Nothing clave to her memory so readily as the instructions of her beloved teacher; and the animation with which she would frequently repeat his striking remarks and beautifully simple representations of Divine truth, sufficiently evinced how well she perceived and felt them. In after-life she was accustomed to refer to these as having assisted her to think rightly on many practical points in religion; and the name of Scott never passed her lips without expressions indicative of high esteem and filial love.

The possession and the bestowment of happiness in a spirit active and affectionate as Martha's, were identified; it was, therefore, an immediate inquiry, how she might make others to share in her pleasure and profit. It was not long before she found means of reply. She had risen into the good opinion and confidence of her governess, and was sometimes employed as a sort of monitor over the younger children. These she induced to prepare their tasks

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once a week in less than the allotted period; and the surplus time was occupied by repeating and urging on their attention, as much of Mr. Scott's address as she could remember. They liked the exercise—it was not an imposed task. Their mistress either connived at or approved it. It became more frequent; and that it might be less open to disturbance, they used to retire into a closet which was attached to the school-room.

Martha was often thrown on her own resources, small as they were; nor did they prove less acceptable to her little auditors. On referring to these engagements only a few months since, she remarked—"What I said to the children I have no idea. It was usually about religion and the Saviour. I was very earnest, and sometimes burst into tears, and not uncommonly, we all wept together." How far these tears were the pledges of real benefit, it is not needful to determine. It is, however, worthy of passing record, that several of the children who thus associated with her, are now sustaining a consistent profession

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of godliness; and one of the number, with which she was especially intimate, is the worthy and pious partner of an excellent minister in the Baptist denomination.

As her understanding expanded, Martha took an increasing interest in the public discourses of the ministry. She had hitherto found pleasure principally in the conversations of her parents, and in those addresses which were especially directed to children; but now, as she obtained power to connect the parts and comprehend the design of a sermon, she felt herself profited, and the sense of profit afforded gratification. She became an attentive hearer of the word preached, and commenced a practice, which she afterwards continued, of noting, either on the Sabbath, or on the ensuing day, what she could recollect of the discourses to which she had attended. The specimens of this practice which I have by me are proofs of a diligent hand and retentive memory.

There are some brief passages in life to which the interest of years is given; in which impressions are made of a nature so

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powerful as to contribute largely in shaping the character and influencing the pursuits of the individual. One of these important periods it is now necessary to observe. It happened that Martha, in her fifteenth year, and in her accustomed attendance on the instituted means of grace, heard a sermon by the Rev. William Allen, then of Exeter, on *the devices of Satan*. The sermon was of course solemn and admonitory. She had probably heard many such before; but she had not been similarly affected by them. She had admired the preacher rather than thought of herself; she had been gratified rather than concerned. Now, however, truth was presented in new and convincing lights; she felt that there was something to be known of which she was ignorant; and her mind was urged, by its own uneasiness, to reflection.

Hitherto Martha's mind had been free from any continued uneasiness on religious accounts. She had been nurtured on the bosom of parental piety; her education had restrained her from many of the faults common to childhood; she rejoiced in the

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exercise of filial love and obedience; her sensibility sympathized with the affecting portion of scripture history; her temper was cheerful, joyous, and unsuspicious; what wonder, then, if she had hastily concluded that she knew all it was necessary to know, felt all it was needful to feel, and did all it was requisite to do?

If any thing occasionally disturbed this state of self-satisfaction, it was the often-reiterated admonition of her anxious and beloved parents: "Remember, my dear, *profession* is not *possession; pious education* is not *piety;* the *form* of godliness will never save you." These exhortations had fixed themselves in her memory, while her mind was unprepared to appreciate them; but, now that her eye was turned inwardly upon herself, they arose to her clothed with an importance they had never worn before, and gave force to those convictions of which she was so entirely the subject.

Martha's principal deficiency had been the want of self-inspection, a defect that is never supplied but by religious influence.

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She had mourned over an evil temper, and confessed the criminality of a wrong action; but she had not inquired into the motives and principles of conduct: she had admitted the truth of our general depravity, but she had not realized it. And now that she was disposed to a sincere examination of her heart, she was surprised and pained at the discoveries which were made to her. In bringing her thoughts, her motives, and her affections to a high, holy, and spiritual standard—a standard she had not before comprehended—she found that the least offence, the least defect, exposed her to condemnation. She was constrained to admit, that she had sinned, and come short of the glory of God; that, however well she might have thought of herself, or her connexions have thought of her, she was "by nature a child of wrath even as others." She awoke as from a profound sleep; she had dreamt of peace and security, but she was awakened by the stings of an accusing serpent coiling round her heart.

These discoveries, in the first instance,

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were not acceptable to her mind. She could not welcome a light that revealed only forbidden objects: she could not at once throw up the hope and confidence in which she trusted; she was unwilling to allow that all her actions and thoughts partook "of the nature of sin;" and she considered it hard to exact a perfect obedience from imperfect creatures. The vague and general ideas she had of the Divine Mercy, and the way in which her susceptible mind had dwelt upon it almost exclusively, tempted her to consider it unsuitable for God to condemn for one offence as for many, and to connect with all offence a punishment as lasting as existence. She was anxious to abandon these sentiments; but Scripture and an enlightened conscience forced them upon her. Her mind was fretted, disappointed, mortified. She was disposed to complain of the Divine Providence; to think of God as an austere master and a severe judge; to say to the sovereign Ruler of the universe, "What doest thou? why hast thou made me thus?"

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This check to the current of penitential sorrow only increased its strength to overcome all resistance. Every day spiritual truth stood out to her view in distincter light, and with greater prominency. The very dispositions which possessed her were employed to fix those convictions on her mind which she was so desirous to reject. In proportion as the irritation of her thoughts yielded to reflection, she was astonished and confounded to find the temper of her mind in opposition to the government of God; a Being she had thought she so truly loved. She found she had been loving and trusting a creature of her own imagination, and not the God of the Scriptures; that while she thought God altogether such a one as herself, she admired and approved; but when he became her reprover, and set her sins in order before her eyes, she was disposed to resist, to fight, to rebel. The truth burst upon her like a revelation—"The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God; neither, indeed, can it be!" The majesty, the forbearance, the purity,

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the mercy of God—the pride, the unbelief, the rebellion of her spirit, were all apparent to her. She cordially justified God, and condemned herself; she sank before the eternal throne, shedding the overflowing tears of generous contrition and godly sorrow. Her's was now the spirit and the language of the enlightened and humbled patriarch: "I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes: behold I am vile!"

Now came the great, the momentous question—What shall I do to be saved? The question and the reply had often been brought to her thoughts in the course of a religious education; but they had not been rightly understood and valued. They had been in her memory like a prescription in the hands of a healthy man, unnoticed or disesteemed. To estimate the doctrine of salvation, it must be desired—desired above all things, from a conviction of its indispensable necessity. She now found herself to be in a state of imminent

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peril; she was alive to a sense of her helplessness in attempting her own deliverance; she felt herself in the condition of the disciple sinking amidst the opening waves, and ready to perish; and her eye looked eagerly for an object to which she might attach her dying hopes, and from which she might bring peace to her troubled spirit.

To possess the theory of religion only, is of high advantage. It is possessing the escape-ladder, which, though it may never have been used, is always ready for use when the hour of distress shall arrive. Thousands, from their ignorance of Divine truth, have to inquire for the means of salvation when they should be intent only on their application. They are aware of their danger, but know not where their help is to be found; and they remain in a state of most fearful distress, if they are not precipitated into overwhelming despair.

From these perplexities Martha did not suffer. In the ruin of her existing hopes, she knew where her only, her last dependence must rest, and her eye turned

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spontaneously to that Saviour who is the hope and consolation of Israel. With this object her mind had been familiarised for many years; but it is important to mark the fresh lights in which it was now contemplated. Before, it was the Saviour's gentleness of temper, the benevolence of his heart, the innocence of his life, the distress of his circumstances, or the agonies of his final hours, that called forth her sympathy, while the more exalted parts of his character rested behind a veil, which she had little desire to remove. Now, however, it was on these her thoughts most earnestly dwelt. The Saviour as mediator; his engagements for man's redemption; his authority to forgive sins; his power to propitiate Divine justice, and bring near to us the infinite Mercy; his conquest over our spiritual foes, and his bestowment of a renewing, sanctifying spirit,—these were the particulars in his character and work, which were felt to be so needful to her condition. She searched the Scriptures afresh, and found that they testified of Him in a sense and with a

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power to which she had been hitherto a stranger. She saw that Christ was indeed the wisdom of God—the power of God—the Son of God—God himself, manifested in the flesh. It was apparent to her, that the Saviour, possessing the nature of God and man, was qualified to stand in the breach, and effect our reconciliation. A scheme of salvation lay before her above her hopes—above her thoughts: she could not doubt its suitableness—it was exactly what she wanted: she could not question its sufficiency—it was the production of inexhaustible love. "No," she remarked at this period with peculiar emphasis, "I cannot for a moment doubt the ability or the willingness of Jesus to save to the very uttermost; my only doubt is, whether I have come to him aright for salvation."

This doubt, while it proved her sincere and honest dealing with herself, was salutary in its consequences. It excited her caution, gave fervency to her prayers, and rendered her diligent and persevering in her inquiries. It had possession of her mind; but she could not grant it a quiet

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and continued residence. Her fears were raised by the presence of real and extreme dangers; and nothing could subdue them less than a real, reasonable, and scriptural hope that they were removed. The approbation of God, the safety of her spirit, the right and cordial acceptance of the Redeemer, were things of infinitely too great importance in her esteem to be thought of with indifference, or suspended in voluntary doubt. She was not now hesitating in her determinations between God and Mammon, Christ and Belial; she was whole-hearted; and it was not in the power of youth, with all its buoyancy and thoughtlessness, nor of the world, with all its fascinating and unbroached delights, to give her spirit ease and comfort, till she had found a satisfactory reply to that affecting question which is addressed to the conscience of every child of man—"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

The means were sincerely employed, and they were attended by the promised success. She asked, and received; she sought, and found; she knocked at the

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door of truth and mercy, and to her it was opened. Hope took possession of her mind; and the very perturbations which troubled it, proved it also to be both sure in itself, and stedfastly fixed on the things which cannot be shaken. Her thoughts became tranquil, and they settled themselves intently on Him who is the author and finisher of our faith. She was particularly encouraged by observing the character of the Saviour's invitations, and the persons to which they were addressed. He stood before her in all his mediatorial excellence and efficiency, as the helper of the helpless, the friend of the destitute, the surety of the debtor, the saviour of the lost. She approached unto Him, and put her trust under the shadow of his wings. She deliberately renounced whatever was contrary to the love of Him; and placed her reliance on his sacrifice and mediation for acceptance with the Father. She acknowledged Him as her first, her last, her only, her sufficient hope of salvation; and she committed herself, body, soul, and spirit, into his hands, to be redeemed from all evil,

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to be controlled by his Divine authority, and to be modelled after his most holy will. In one word—she believed; and believing, she rejoiced with joy unspeakable; it was the joy of penitence—the joy of hope—the joy of love—the joy of gratitude—the joy of Heaven!

These exercises of the mind, though they are brought within a few short paragraphs, were extended through many days, and even several weeks. With them, she was disposed to hope, commenced that change without which she could not expect to enter the kingdom of Heaven. She might have been moved by the influence of the good Spirit at earlier periods; but she dared not conclude on the possession of an inward principle of spiritual life, except as she was brought to discover her spiritual state, and raised to the love and pursuit of spiritual objects. Her thoughts were not occupied with curious and vain inquiries on the precise moment in which this life originated; she was content to trace its existence in its effects. She felt there was no comparison in the importance

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of the two questions — Do I live? and When did I begin to live? Happily, God has furnished us with ample means of satisfaction on the one inquiry; while the other, except as we judge by the evidences of life, is, with as much wisdom as delicacy, veiled from our knowledge. Life of no class, vegetable, animal, or spiritual, is to be ascertained by detecting the vital principle; and yet it is, of all things, most apparent by its outward expressions. A truth this, which, had it been properly regarded, would have preserved the minds of many from being diverted or perplexed by needless and impracticable inquiries; and would have given them, at once, an active and prospective direction.

Such a change, bringing the mind into accordance with the humbling truths of the Scriptures, and elevating it into sympathy with an invisible and eternal world, whatever may be the adaptation of means, must, without hesitation, be ascribed to the finger of God. I am aware, that this allusion to a Divine agency, will provoke the censure of the world. But it is a re-

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ceived maxim, even with the world, that the Deity may be introduced on an occasion worthy of himself; and can we conceive any thing more worthy of the divine Mercy and Majesty, than to illuminate, and sanctify, and restore to himself, an immortal spirit, which has wandered from his feet, and is alienated from the life and blessedness it is alone qualified to enjoy?

Yet the world will exclaim, "This is a hard saying!" and the most candid, perplexed by a subject beyond the circle of their thoughts, will, with a teacher in Israel, demand, "How can these things be?" However mortifying to our pride and complacency, this question admits only one reply — These things, rightly to be understood, must be truly experienced. To see the light, we must be in the light. To comprehend a spiritual life, we must live spiritually. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." He wants the answering faculty; and without this, his conceptions of a "life he does not live" will be

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as vague, as unreal, and as wild, as the conclusions of the blind man who compared the colour of scarlet to the sound of a trumpet. But let him fear to deny what he does not perceive. These things are as *rational* as they are important. To deny the necessity of a divine change, is to deny the uniform testimony of Scripture, supported by the voice of conscience, and the universal state of mankind. To deny its possibility, is to deny a Providence, to sit in judgment on our Maker, to exclude him from the work of his own hands, and to say that the spirit he has formed, as his living temple, he has power neither to occupy nor to influence.

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CHAPTER IV.

AFFLICTION. 1809.

LIFE is a progressive principle; and, in its progress to vigour and maturity, is often assisted by apparently adverse principles. The tree is frequently *distressed* that it may bear fruit; man is inoculated with disease that he may preserve his health; and the Christian is called to endure affliction that his divine nature may be purified from earthly adhesions, and shine out the brighter and the stronger.

It was the will of Providence that the good work begun on the mind of Martha should be established by suffering. It happened in the commencement of this year that Mrs. Wilks, the consort of the Reverend Matthew Wilks, suddenly expired. Martha was amongst the many who admired and loved this most excellent woman when living, and who mourned

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her dissolution when dead. It was her earnest request that her parents would allow her to witness the interment of the earthly remains in Bunhill Fields—that ancient and sacred place of sepulture which, above all others, perhaps, will be prepared to welcome the awakening trumpet of the archangel. The day was bleak and damp; the melting snows were upon the ground; her parents objected; but she entreated and prevailed. What with the unfitness of the weather, the agitation of her spirits, and her want of caution to avoid disease she had never felt, she received a violent cold. This was soon removed; but a troublesome cough, which attended it, remained upon her, and bade defiance to the care and medicine employed to irradicate it. There were, however, no consumptive tendencies in her constitution; and the cough, though it gave uneasiness, excited no alarm, till, in the month of July, when it appeared to be passing away, it ruptured a blood-vessel. This was a distressing and fearful event to all the family; farther professional

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advice was taken, and Martha was ordered to leave town immediately.

In selecting a place where she might enjoy a purer air and greater quiet, the choice fell upon Cheshunt, a pleasant village at the foot of the Hertfordshire hills. Here the bosom of a family was open to receive her, of which her parents had a slight acquaintance; and to its protection they therefore resigned their afflicted child with the less reluctance.

The hand which had brought Martha under its corrections, had also provided for her, in this family, a friend who contributed considerably to soothe her bodily sufferings and to promote her spiritual improvement. This young person was of her own sex, and but little her superior in years. They were both ardent in their sensibility, unsuspicious in ther confidence, and sincerely devoted to religious pursuits. Neither had as yet found a friend to whom she could fully communicate on the subject which now filled their attention. They spent their days and their nights together. They walked at

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the same hour; they worked at the same table; they read the same book; they joined in the same prayer. They were pleased and surprised to find, that, as face answereth to face in a glass, so did the exercises of their minds correspond. They had thought that their state was altogether peculiar; but now they found they had been agitated by similar griefs, humbled under conviction of similar offences, and brought, through similar perplexities of mind, to rely on the almighty and compassionate Redeemer. They communed with themselves and with each other; they edified one another on their most holy faith; and their hearts were knit together in love—in Christian love, the most powerful and refined of all sympathies.

Martha, it will be felt, was in circumstances to be particularly affected by this intercourse. She was amongst strangers; her mind was softened by disease; she was in want of those attentions, which imperceptibly, and therefore surely, make their way to the heart. Her young friend readily seized the opportunity of offering

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these attentions. She became a staff to her trembling steps when she sought the refreshing influence of the air; she administered punctually the salutary portions of prescribed medicine; she surprised her sluggish appetite with tempting articles of nourishment; and studied, in manifold instances, her present ease and ultimate restoration. Is it strange, if a spirit like Martha's, inclined to kindle into gratitude and love on the slightest show of kindliness, should feel deeply, perhaps excessively, in the exercise of so much real and unostentatious sympathy, imparted, as it was, without any claims of previous friendship.

There is a thorn in every nest. Amid this retirement, it did not appear possible for her to be visited with any external vexation; but even here distress found its way to her, in a form which it had never before assumed. The family which thus afforded her so sincere a friend, possessed a member of very opposite principles and character. This relative was a young man chiefly remarkable for his ignorance and

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wilfulness. Unsocial in his manners; neglectful of his calling; disobedient to his parents; and of so vexatious a temper, as, if ever capable of happiness, to find it only in the unhappiness of others. Revelation, least of all things, could be acceptable to such a person; and he *chose*, therefore, to become an infidel. It was truly a matter of choice with him, and not of opinion; he professed not to argue on the subject; it was enough for him that he could show his daring, by slandering and profaning what others held to be most sacred.

This daring unbeliever, however, was dastardly enough to attempt, in every way, the annoyance of two young females, one of them his relative, and the other an invalid, a stranger, and beneath the protection of his family! He gave them the greatest provocation, and then reproached them with the want of meekness; he made them sad by his presence, and then insulted them for their demure hypocrisy; he shocked their ears with his blasphemies, and found satanic delight in the

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pains he had created; and so much was he the enemy of all godliness, that even when they fled to their closets for peace, he would often enter on some contrivance, to disturb their devotions.

The trials which, to the spectator, may appear to be intolerable, are sometimes welcomed by the individual who is to suffer them. Martha had erred with many young Christians in supposing, that while she lacked opposition, she wanted one evidence of Christian character; not considering, that, in her case, opposition had been hitherto an impossibility, as her connexions had been limited to the friends of real piety. This disposition of mind, however, prepared her to meet these rude assaults with comparative calmness. She felt herself to be innocent; and therefore entered into the blessedness of those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. She bowed her head quietly to the storm; she embraced the more favourable moments of saying something that might fasten on the conscience of the offender; and when, as often happened, her tender

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spirits were jaded by blustering and noise, she withdrew to her chamber, seeking relief by weeping at the feet of her Saviour, and presenting afresh that prayer which was offered by him who prayed as never man prayed: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

After the lapse of a couple of months, Martha returned to the embraces of her parents, improved in health, enriched in friendship, and benefitted even by the tongue of persecution. Her life was made precarious by disease, and her thoughts were brought nearer to eternity. She had been enabled to exercise a divine temper under provocation, and it gave her fuller assurance of possessing a divine nature. She was confirmed in gratitude and confidence; and she walked in the light of the divine countenance!

The sky that is cleared too quickly is seldom tranquil. Martha had passed with comparative celerity into a state of lively enjoyment; but in the remaining months of this year her mind was frequently overcast by the clouds of anxiety and doubt.

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I learn this chiefly from her correspondence with her young friend, from whom she was now separated; and which is very kindly put into my hands to use at discretion. As the christian is known equally by what he *fears* as by what he *hopes*, it may be expedient to make a few extracts from her letters at this period. It will be remembered, that they are the expressions of a child of sixteen, and of a mind too intent on things to study words.

"*Sept.*—A week is passed since we were called to a painful separation; and we are a week nearer to eternity. I feel my mind more deeply impressed than ever by the importance of eternal things. O, if we lived more for eternity, how different would our conversation and all our conduct be! To think that we are dying creatures, and come into this world only as probationers for an eternal one—solemn thought! To recollect that I have been sixteen years in the world, and that so very, very little of that time has been devoted to the purpose for which I came into being! But I must stop and adore

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the Goodness which has spared me to this moment. O, that we may be enabled to live more as dying creatures!"

"I hope the Lord will never suffer us to deceive ourselves. Let us pray much that he would search us and try us. Though our hearts are so deceitful, yet we may come to a knowledge of our characters; and how important is it to know this! It will make our afflictions pleasant; it will enliven our love and all our graces; it will teach us to look on all earthly things as straw and stubble, which are to be burned."

"I have just had another fit of coughing. If I should be removed from you, do not repine. Remember, the Lord brought us together, and we shall not be parted till he sees fit. O, my dear, let me entreat you to be sober and vigilant, because of your adversaries. Watch, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh. My dear, heaven is worth striving for! To think of being for ever with the Lord! Let us determine, in the strength of Jesus, to knock, and to knock

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hard too, at the door of Mercy, till we gain admission."

"Faint, yet, I hope, pursuing. I am much afraid I have been deceiving myself; I have such a very deceitful heart; and indeed, I hardly know what reasons I have for thinking I am a child of God. I dare not deny that a change has taken place in me, but I fear it is not a change wrought by the Spirit of God; I am so lukewarm, so cold and indifferent. You know every Christian has faith and humility; and I am afraid I have neither. I am afraid to hope, and yet afraid not to hope. This is a paradox; but you can understand it. O, my dear, pray for me, that I may be altogether, and not almost, a Christian!"

"I have had a great many doubts and fears lately. I find so much pride, and unbelief in my heart, that I think, at times, there cannot be any grace there. I am often afraid I am deceiving myself; and fear I am like the barren fig-tree. You know what the end of that is, though it appear ever so green and beautiful. May

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we bring forth much fruit—the fruits of the Spirit!—This is a hard conflict; but let us rejoice that it is a conflict—that our enemies have it not all their own way:

> "Still toss'd tempestuous on the sea of life,
> My little bark is driven to and fro;
> With winds and waves I hold unequal strife,
> Nor can decide the doubtful course I go;
> O may we reach that blissful shore,
> Where storms and winds distress no more."

"Let us never forget that we are travellers to an eternal world. To what *place* in that world are we bound? If to Canaan, we must remember there is a waste-howling wilderness to pass through, innumerable enemies to fight, and a Jordan to cross; but let us not be discouraged; our enemies are mighty—our Saviour is almighty. He has said, Fear not worm Jacob; my strength is made perfect in thy weakness. O, my dear, humbly relying on this strength, let us go forth and fight courageously the battles of the Lord of Hosts, not fearing that we shall come off more than conquerors through Him who hath loved us, and died for us,

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and will not withhold from us any good thing."

"I have felt my mind more calm since I saw you; but, alas! I am ready to fear it is a *false* calm. You will ask me my reasons. I think, if it were a true peace, I should be more humbled under a sense of sin, and should walk far more close with God. O, that we may lie humbled at the footstool of the Saviour, that we bear no more resemblance to him. And let us not rest here; but, with the greatest importunity, beseech him to give us his Holy Spirit, that he may conform our hearts entirely to his image."

These *variations* of mind, thus artlessly described, are in some measure necessarily connected with the young Christian's experience. The very *strangeness* of his situation will produce them. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into his mind with a new and powerful illumination; and a thousand objects relative to himself and others, to this life and that which is to come, press

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upon his attention at once, awing him by their sublimity, and dazzling him by their brightness. He is in the circumstances of the blind man who is suddenly restored to sight. The innumerable objects which are at once presented to his view, do not permit him to look on any without confusion and pain. It is not only needful that the faculty of vision should be perfect; there must be time to apply it separately to the different objects which present themselves, before he can assure himself, that he distinctly sees them in the lights and distances in which they are really placed.

These alternations of hope and fear will also be promoted by the *intensity* of the interest, where the mind is sincere in its inquiries. It is fixed earnestly on things of extreme, of infinite importance. To be interested in the divine favour which it has forfeited, and to escape the wrath to come which it has deserved, are blessings on which it exhausts all its reflections, and which yet it cannot fully appreciate. It is anxious, above all things, to reach a favourable

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conclusion; but shudders at the thought of reaching it by false premises. Its very intentness on a decision—so awful, so desirable—holds it frequently in trembling suspense. The man, whose mind is balancing between supposed or real trifles, may preserve his indifference; but, if he is pursuing an inquiry on the issue of which his property, his character, his life, are to depend, what agitations of doubt and desire will necessarily possess him! Who, then, shall doubt the reasonableness, or estimate the force, of those anxieties which are associated with all that eternity can reveal, all that an immortal spirit can suffer or enjoy?

Although these anxieties will naturally spring from the importance of the truths which are contemplated, and the freshness of the light which surrounds them, it must be admitted, that they may be greatly prolonged or exaggerated by other circumstances. Martha was not so painfully affected by them as many; but she might probably have been less so, had her years allowed her to mark the influence of the

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body on the mind, and to discriminate between physical sensations and christian principles.

Still less she might have suffered in this conflict of hope and fear, had she sought matured and sage counsel. But the young love to confide in the young; and she was content to have found a friend to whom she could freely unbosom herself. Her friend, similarly situated with herself, was well fitted to become a sympathetic companion; but she was not sufficiently advanced before her, to be an experienced guide. In addition to the comforts of this friendship, had she sought the direction of her parents on the perplexities of her mind as they arose, she might have been sooner relieved. For the present, however, humility and respect threw undue restraints upon her; and she could only join generally in religious conversation, without alluding to any influence it exerted on her own spirit.

While these observations are thrown out as waymarks to others, it is pleasing to notice, that these renewed perturbations of

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heart, were over-ruled by a gracious Hand, to produce the best effects. The various views she took of her situation, gave her deeper conviction of the impotence of her nature, and her liability to temptation and sin. Hope gathered resistance, like the elasticity of a spring, from the pressure of fear; her faith took the firmer grasp, because an enemy sought to shake it from its hold; and her love was ultimately borne more quickly to heaven by those winds which threatened to beat it down to earth. She yet more earnestly employed every instituted means of grace; she eagerly propounded to her parents questions of conscience, without noticing their relation to herself; and she diligently read, as she had opportunity, those books which were suited to her temper, and illustrative of her experience.

Amongst the books which were thus perused, was the "Rise and Progress of Religion," by the truly christian Doddridge. From this work she received (who has not?) considerable assistance and benefit. It shed more light upon her way, and con-

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sequently gave more steadiness to her steps, and serenity to her heart. Here she met with a form of covenant, and with urgent exhortations to adopt it as her own. She was docile, and willing to be directed; but she was humble, and shrunk from so solemn and explicit a mode of engagement. Yet she felt that she had already virtually done what was here recommended, and she was disposed to construe her hesitancy in doing it more formally, into a want of seriousness and sincerity. This jealousy of herself decided her in adopting it. It was readily embraced, as a means of satisfying herself, that she had long been whole-hearted in the surrender she hoped she had already made to the Saviour of her body, soul, and spirit.

She was, however, too conscientious to employ any form of words, how excellent soever, with precipitancy. She passed over it sentence by sentence, and word by word; making every variation and omission which she found necessary to her full and cheerful acquiescence. Because it is thus varied, and because it is a hallowed

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and interesting document in her life, I shall not scruple to introduce it in closing this chapter, connected with her reflections upon it in a letter to her friend, who alone knew of the transaction.

I am aware that this practice has been condemned, on the one hand, as enthusiastic, and on the other, as pharisaical; and a writer of eminence has recently endeavoured to fix upon it, somewhat inconsistently, the entire weight of this two-fold objection. If these censures are directed against the *abuses* of the thing *only*, they will receive the sanction of every sober mind. There have, undoubtedly, been extravagancies of expression, and modes of signature, and a high self-confiding temper manifested, which should be most seriously deprecated. But, if these censures are meant, as is feared, to go beyond *this*, let it be remembered, that the practice which is so fully countenanced by scripture, and has been so generally pursued by the wisest and most devoted of Christians, cannot be essentially wrong. And, what is of infinitely greater moment,

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let it be distinctly felt, that the *spirit* of the practice is the spirit of all religion. Self-dedication is of the very nature and essence of religion. If this is sincerely admitted, the mode of expressing it, is comparatively of small importance, and the Christian may consult his individual benefit in coming to a decision. It is optional, whether we "subscribe to the Lord with our *hand*;" but it is imperative that we subscribe to Him with the *heart*. "Circumcision," the mere sign of dedication, "is nothing;" and "uncircumcision," the want of that sign, "is nothing;" but "a new creature," the act of surrendering ourselves totally, and for ever, to God, against whom we have rebelled, *this is every thing!*

FORM OF SELF-DEDICATION.

"Eternal and unchangeable Jehovah! Thou great Creator of heaven and earth, and adorable Lord of angels and men! I desire, with the deepest humiliation and abasement of soul, to fall down at this time in thine awful presence; and I earnestly pray, that thou wilt penetrate my very

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heart, with a suitable sense of thine unutterable and inconceivable glories!

"Trembling may justly take hold upon me, when I, a sinful worm, presume to lift up my head to Thee, and to appear in thy majestic presence on such an occasion as this. Who am I, O Lord God, or what is my house? What is my nature or descent, my character and desert, that I should desire to be one party in a covenant, when thou, the King of kings and Lord of lords, art the other. I would blush and be confounded even to mention it before thee; but, O Lord, great as is thy majesty, so also is thy mercy. If thou wilt hold converse with any of thy creatures, thy superlatively exalted nature must stoop, must stoop infinitely low! And, I know, that in and through Jesus, the Son of thy love, thou condescendest to visit sinful mortals, and to allow their approach unto Thee, that they may give themselves to Thee for ever.

"To Thee, therefore, do I now come, invited by the name of thy Son, and, I hope, wholly trusting in his perfect righteousness

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and grace. Laying myself at thy feet with shame and confusion of face, and smiting upon my breast, I say, with the humble publican, God be merciful to me, a sinner! I acknowledge, O Lord, that I have been a great transgressor. My sins have reached to the heavens, and my iniquities are lifted up unto the clouds. And if thou shouldest be strict to mark my offences, I must be silent under a load of guilt, and immediately sink into destruction. But thou hast graciously called me to return unto Thee, though I have been a backsliding and rebellious child. Behold, therefore, I am come unto Thee. I come convinced, not only of my sin, but of my folly. Receive, therefore, I beseech Thee, thy revolted creature, who is now convinced of thy right to her, and desires nothing so much as that she may be entirely thine. Permit me, O Lord, to bring back to Thee those powers and faculties, which I have ungratefully and sacrilegiously alienated from thy service.

"Blessed God! it is with the utmost solemnity that I make this surrender of my-

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self to Thee. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: I avouch the Lord this day to be my God; and I avouch and declare myself to be one of his covenant children and people. Hear, O thou God of heaven, and record it in the book of thy remembrance, that henceforth I am thine, entirely thine! From this day do I solemnly renounce all the former lords which have had dominion over me, every sin and every lust; and bid, in thy name, defiance to the powers of hell, which have, most unjustly, usurped the empire of my soul. All that I am, and all I have, the faculties of my mind, and members of my body, my worldly possessions, my time, and my influence over others, I consecrate to Thee. In thy service I desire to spend all the remainder of my time upon earth; and I beg that thou wouldest instruct and influence me so, that whether my abode here be longer or shorter, every year and month, every day and hour, may be used in such a manner as shall most effectually promote thine honour, and subserve the design of thy wise and gracious Providence.

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O blessed God! I would steadily persevere in this course, to the very end of life; earnestly praying, that every future day of it may supply the deficiencies, and correct the errors, of the former; and that I may, by Divine grace, be enabled, not only to hold on in this happy way, but to become more active in it!

"Use me, O Lord, I beseech Thee, as an instrument of thy service. Number me among thy peculiar people. Let me be washed in the blood of thy dear Son. Transform me more and more into his image. Impart to me, through him, all the needful influences of thy purifying, cheering, and comforting Spirit; and let my life be spent under those influences, and in the light of thy gracious countenance, as my Father and my God.

"And when the solemn hour of death shall come, may I remember this covenant of thine, well ordered in all things and sure as all my salvation and all my desire, though every other hope and enjoyment is perishing. And do thou, O Lord, remember it too! Look down with pity,

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O, my heavenly Father, on thy languishing, dying child. Embrace me in thine everlasting arms. Put strength and confidence in my departing spirit; and receive it to the abode of them who sleep in Jesus, to partake in all the blessings of thy covenant, through Him who is the great Mediator of it. To whom, with thee, O Father, and thy Holy Spirit be ascribed everlasting praises.

MARTHA."

"*December* 29*th*, 1809."

"*Dec.* 28. Last night I read the chapter on self-dedication again, and with feelings which I cannot describe. I was tempted to think I was not sincere in wishing thus solemnly to give myself to the Lord; but with overflowing gratitude I may tell you, that these conflicts were over-ruled to make me more than ever willing to be entirely the Lord's."

"*Dec.* 29. I tremble and rejoice! I have this night set my hand, that, from this time, I will be the Lord's. I know I need not say, pray for me; but let me

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beg you to pray, more earnestly than ever, that I may not openly and wilfully break my engagements! My mind, upon the whole, is calm."

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CHAPTER V.

EXPANDING CHARACTER. 1810.

MARTHA, with every appearance of health, remained unwell through the early part of this year; and the mere continuance of unpleasant symptoms gave her friends the more alarm. As, in the summer, ministerial engagements called me to B——, I resolved to take her to the Hot Wells, hoping that the change of air and the use of the waters, might afford her permanent relief. In this expectation, we left our home in a chaise, and became for some weeks each other's sole or principal companion.

In such circumstances there is something favourable to the formation of friendship and the promotion of intimacy. The

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absence of all other familiar countenances; the opportunity of uninterrupted communion; the invigorating power of the living air; the novelties of changing scenery; and the sense of fellowship in all that cheers and gratifies; have an imperceptible influence in opening the heart. Our hearts had never been closed to each other; but the channels of sympathy had been obstructed by separation; and they now sought to recompense themselves by the most free and unreserved intercourse. I still have distinctly the impression made by my sister's character, at this time, on my mind; and as it is consistent with my purpose, I shall endeavour to copy it into this narrative.

Nothing, at this period, was so immediately apparent as the lovely *simplicity* of her mind. This excellence had been always her's. With less sensibility, or a false education, it might have been alloyed by the debasing power of vanity. As it was, she had been rescued from this bindweed of the heart; and she was now presented, once for all, in the mirror of

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divine truth, with such a view of her character as furnished an effectual antidote to its influence. In her were no conceits so common to youthful inexperience; no affectations of qualities she did not possess; no confessions in which the heart did not sympathise; no hesitation of opinion and choice which perplexed and varied her steps.

Religion had placed one object, and one only, before her, as the one thing needful. Other things might be desirable; this alone was indispensable. She allowed nothing to stand in comparison with it; but pressed towards it with an undivided heart. Life was no longer in danger of being preyed upon by vacant listlessness, or frittered away by contrary and trivial claims. She had one single aim, one great pursuit before her, and it gave simplicity to her views, and steadiness to her course. She did not look at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things that are unseen and eternal. She had entered on the race; the unwithering laurels were before her. The clearness with which she

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saw the prize, and the frailties which shook her frame, made her judge herself to be near the goal; and she did not allow herself to be retarded by the thorns of needless controversy, or diverted by the impertinences of an indolent curiosity. Her eye was single, and her whole body was full of light. Her's was not merely the simplicity of nature and of youth, which is charming; it was "the simplicity of Christ," which is divine.

Religion also had shed over her mind its own *seriousness*. Her disposition had never been frivolous; now it was not gloomy; but it was truly serious—a temper of mind which is the invariable companion of wisdom, and the germ of all moral excellence. So soon as the mind is engaged by any great and interesting objects, it necessarily becomes serious. Martha's thoughts had dwelt intently on the value of the soul, the solemnities of eternity, the grandeur of Deity, and the magnitude of the Saviour's redemption, and they diffused something of their own greatness and solemnity on her character. Every

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thing in this life was allied to immortality; nothing therefore was trivial. She had a race to run, and a conflict to sustain, whose consequences would reach to eternity—she would win or lose for ever—she could not be otherwise than serious. She had stood in the light of divine truth, and had communed with all that is great and glorious in the invisible world, and she could no more trifle than could Moses on descending from the mount of Divine habitation. This seriousness of mind rested on her whole deportment, rather than showed itself in particular instances; yet her correspondence with her friend, which I have already noticed, supplies one illustration worthy of remark. All her letters, at this time, commence with such mottos as the following—"Eternity!" "Think of eternity!" "Act for Eternity!" "Prepare for Eternity!" "Prepare to meet your God!"—a circumstance sufficient of itself to show how vivid were her conceptions, how deep her impressions of objects, above all others, calculated to exalt and solemnize the thoughts.

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Equally conspicuous was her strict *conscientiousness*. She had early been affected by ideas of the Divine omnipresence. These were become clearer and stronger; and were coupled with correct perceptions of the Divine authority. She now saw that the *reason* for every thing was to be found only in the will of God; and that this will was revealed exclusively in the Holy Scriptures. Her own partialities and desires, the opinions and examples of others, were not to regulate her. The word of God was to be her standard. She, therefore, sought to submit herself implicitly to it; desirous of believing all it revealed, of doing all it commanded, and of avoiding all it proscribed.

An authority thus recognised, gave importance to every thing on which it rested. Nothing, however trifling in itself, could be insignificant which was accompanied by the command or prohibition of God. The Scriptures therefore were her habitual counsellor. They were not only the title to her inheritance, but the map which delineated her daily course. She tried by

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them, not merely her hopes and principles, but her thoughts and temper. Yea, in the allotment of her time, the use of her money, the mode of her dress, the nature of her recreations, and the selection of her friendships, their voice was earnestly solicited and obeyed. Frequently at this period, when discussing opinions or practices of the professing world, she would observe, with a conscientiousness softened by humility—"This is very strange!—How can they reconcile it!—It *seems* directly opposite to Scripture—They should surely either reject the word of God, or act upon it."

Benevolence, which was so early indicated in my sister, may be supposed to take a prominent place in her present character. In her childhood, what had the appearance of benevolence, was very much the overflow of natural and instinctive feelings; but now these were moulded into an abiding and energetic principle. She had been taught to entertain the most lowly ideas of herself, which is an indispensable preparative to thinking kindly of others. She had sat at the feet of him,

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who is essential love, and his love constrained her to imitate his excellence. She had drunk into the spirit of that religion which breathes good-will to men, and peace over the face of the whole earth; and acting on a heart full of tender emotions, it produced the most humble devotedness to her Saviour, and enlightened anxiety for the welfare of all mankind.

The sincerity and strength of our benevolence are discovered, not by desiring great occasions for its exercise, but by diligently embracing those that offer. Martha had but small opportunities of doing good at present; but these she thankfully improved. She evinced a peculiar concern for the spiritual interests of her younger brother; she conversed freely with children and persons younger than herself on the subject now nearest her thoughts; and she expended all her pocket-money in purposes of benevolence, principally in the purchase of religious tracts for distribution amongst the poor.

Those who are seeking occasions of usefulness, shall not fail to find them. It

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happened, that soon after our arrival at the Wells, a lady, with her daughter, engaged apartments in the same house. We soon learned the mother's tale of woe. She had come hither as to a forlorn hope with her beloved, her only daughter, who had the most fatal symptoms of decline upon her, and she herself was a widow. Martha was deeply interested in the state of the sufferer; and by making herself of some use to the strangers, quickly opened a channel of intercourse.

She found the daughter to be about twenty years of age, of very amiable mind and manners. She had but recently known her danger, and she was literally confounded at the idea of dying, while she thought herself in the very midst of life. Presuming on this life, she had not thought of that which is to come; and the very sense of neglect made it doubly unwelcome. Martha, however, by her kindness, made her way to her heart, and soon afterwards won her attention to the things which belonged to her peace. She died; but not, I trust, until she had drank of

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those medicated waters which bring life and healing to the wounded spirit. Martha's name was amongst the last words that quivered on her lips; and it was one of those events to which my sister was accustomed to recur with eminent gratitude.

Nor must I omit to observe, that religion had awakened *tastes*, and opened sources of enjoyment to which she had hitherto been nearly, if not entirely, insensible. She had never any relish for the common pleasures of the world. The glitter of the ball-room, the excitement of the card-table, the mimickry of the theatre, formed no temptation to her; her mind was above them. The theatre, especially, she was led to despise, by a trivial and ludicrous occurrence.

When we were children at Mitcham, we stole out into the fair which is held at that place; and I, as the best expression of my love, resolved to treat my sister to the most respectable of all the exhibitions. We entered. I know not the subject of the play; but of course

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it was about love. A scene opened towards the middle of the acting, which presented us with a garden containing a splendid monument, in which it was supposed a murdered lover was inclosed; which lover, however, was concealed behind the monument, to discover himself in due time. The lady entered with her tears and lamentations; and, as if the painted marble had been moved by her noisy sorrows, it trembled and fell. A man was revealed crouching beside it, and looking incomparably silly, and the woman ceased her wailings, and reflected his confusion. The spectators were mostly, like ourselves, children; and we burst into a hearty fit of laughter. The performers made their retreat by dropping the curtain. Martha never lost the impression made by this mummery. A play-house to her was always a puppet-show, only varied by the expense of its ornaments, and the skill of its imitations. As she became aware of the moral character of our theatres, and of most who attend them, her indifference deepened into aversion. She thought that

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those who could be made better by the theatre must be something less, and that those who could not be injured must be something more, than human.

While I knew that Martha's uniform simplicity and present seriousness saved her from the pursuit of those factitious and turbulent pleasures which are so fascinating to youth, I was not prepared to find a relish created for those gratifications, which are as pure and exalted as they are beneficial. I knew that she had a feeling heart, and that her mind had been raised and enlarged by religion; but I was not expecting that already religion should extend its influence to objects beyond itself. Religion, however, is closely allied to all things good, beautiful, and noble; and in the heart she inhabits, she wakens sympathies towards them more effectually than can be done by any modes of moral or mental refinement, independent of her assistance.

Martha, though her attention had been confined chiefly to one object; though she had read but few books, and those mostly of

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one class, now discovered an attachment for whatever adorns the mind, or enlarges the capacities for real happiness. She had a taste, not, indeed, at present a cultivated one, for music, for painting, and for poetry; but especially for Nature, whence, as from an inexhaustible treasury, we borrow, poorly borrow, all that is harmonious in sound, all that is lovely in picture, and all that is eloquent in poesy. Every thing in Nature suited the simplicity of her mind, and the piety of her thoughts. There she met with God; and all was interesting to her which was the work of his hand. She admired the lily and the rose, since his hand adorned them; she sympathized with the sparrow and the robin, since his hand protected them, as she had never done before; and her ravished eye dwelt on all things beautiful on earth, or bright in Heaven, as formed by her Saviour's power, embellished by her Saviour's excellence, and continuing for her Saviour's glory.

Tastes, thus quickly formed by religion and the scriptures, I was anxious to ex-

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ercise and strengthen; and our daily walks and rides in the charming vicinity of C—— and B—— afforded the most excellent opportunities. Martha had not been twenty miles from the metropolis before; and, what with the novelty of the scenes, the still-abiding freshness of religious enjoyment, and her first becoming fully conscious of extended capacities for happiness, her cup of joy was often full even to overflowing. I necessarily connect the finest points of scenery in that neighbourhood with the thought of her, and the expressions of her countenance, varied, as they were, by wonder and delight; but there is one evening's walk stands out amongst the pictures of my imagination as superior to the rest in the interest it excited, and, I trust, in the good which it bestowed.

After taking a quiet tea, and reading a portion of some favourite volume, we went abroad to partake the coolness of the coming evening. I was secretly feeding on the pleasure of surprising Martha with the scenery on the banks of the A——.

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To accomplish this, I led her down by the zig-zag path at the back of the pump-room, that the view might break upon her at once. I had chosen the hour and the evening with a reference to the general good effect of the whole; and when we reached the point of observation, I was not a little gratified to find every thing around and above us looking as well as I could desire.

The river, which flows in the lap of hills that seem to have been separated by some great convulsion in nature, was rising with a strong and rapid tide, and bearing on its bosom, in the distance, some vessels, which, with their sails dancing in the wind, were hastening to their port. The rock-work, on one hand, sprang so directly and abruptly from the path, as to have an elevation to the eye which the lofty mountain sometimes fails to possess. On the opposing side, with considerable boldness of contour, there were more sloping and undulating lines, so that the rifted surface was plentifully decorated

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with the beauties of vegetation; and where the rock itself appeared, it was enriched by those living hues which the touch of time can alone impart. On either hand, the rocks, with all their irregularities, inclined towards each other in beautiful perspective, and at length appeared to unite, inclosing the waters and vessels in their arms, and giving a compression, and a consequent magnitude, to the entire scene. The sun had once more travelled to the west; and his rays shot across this picture, so as to give his brilliancy to one half of it, while the remainder was clothed in shadows of a thousand shades. Above us was a fine blue sky, rendered finer by the dark lines of rock-work which conducted the eye to it; and in the far ground, the clouds were resting on the hills, some shining in crimson glory, and some soft and grey, like aërial mountains.

Not only the scene itself, but the class of scenery, was altogether new to Martha; and it inspired her with greater admiration

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than any thing she had already seen. When her eye had dwelt on the whole in silent pleasure, we walked gently forward, remarking the characteristic beauty of the several parts, till, in the review, they composed an entirely different picture. The hills which were now around us went off in softer and radiated lines, so as to form a natural amphitheatre. The underwood shot up in these rising and expanding galleries with greater luxuriance, and was finely relieved by the aspiring heads of the oak and the elm; while the bolder rocks we had left, with their feet in the river, and their heads apparently in the clouds which hung over the distant horizon, constituted a noble back-ground. Twilight had crept over the scene, and had shed its repose over every thing. All human objects had disappeared. The breeze had ceased to murmur, and the waters to ripple. Nothing was heard: nothing was in motion, except the river, which was still flowing, but flowing in silence. Our steps and conversation alone

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seemed to disturb the tranquillity. We sat down beneath some hazel branches, which sprang from the fissures of the rock; sank into meditation; and all—all was profoundly still.

In such a place, on such an evening, and at such a period of life, we might "have thought down hours to moments;" but I was fearful my sister would hazard too much in a lengthened continuance. I turned my eye upon her, designing to express my fears; but I did not catch her attention, and was unwilling to disturb it. She never appeared so interesting to me! The gentlest lights of the dying day dwelt on her countenance. That countenance, originally so full of vivacity, had been subdued by pain, and raised by piety; and it now was expressive of elevated intelligence and pensive delight, beyond any thing I had observed. Her glistening eye, directed to Heaven, told me that her spirit had ascended by things visible to those which are invisible; and her speaking lips seemed to say, that her conver-

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sation was in other worlds. Her eye fell on mine. "Brother!" she exclaimed, with a sweet and blushing face, while the tear of joy and affection started and fell. I embraced her, and rejoiced in her, not merely as a sister, but as a saint. We had always found happiness in each other, yet never such happiness as now. In childhood, our joys, though complete in their kind, were animal and sensitive; now, I trust, they could claim kindred, however humbly, with those which are not only intellectual but spiritual.

We bent our steps towards home reluctantly, sometimes listening to the solemn stillness, and sometimes giving utterance to the prevalent emotion. I quoted part of Cowper's beautiful Hymn on Retirement, and Martha repeated some of the pastoral psalms of David. Before we quitted the spot, the young moon had risen, like a crescent, over the bold forehead of rock-work, illuminating our path, printing its own bright image on the sleeping waters, and casting its light on the op-

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posite hills, so as to make them appear through the mist, which hung over them like a gauzey, transparent veil. That was a blessed evening! And it was the more so, because we felt it derived all its blessedness from Him, who is a well-spring of living joy to those who fear his name!

Digressive as some parts of this chapter may appear, I cannot leave this sketch of my sister's character, without observing, that religion, which had done so much for her, did not fail to create earnest desires *for mental and religious improvement.* It was not merely gratification she sought, it was advancement. She found herself to be a child in knowledge, and was not willing to remain so. She had drunk of the waters of life, and she longed to drink again. New worlds, the rational, the moral, the eternal, were open before her, and she was eager to explore them. The serious views she had taken of human life, made it a duty to seek the improvement of every talent she possessed; and the taste she had had of better things than worldly

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wisdom regards, made it her settled desire and purpose.

I had formerly endeavoured to engage her in some studies, which I considered would be of permanent advantage to her; but she commenced them rather from affection to me, than from any sense of their real value. The inward native relish was wanting; and her resolution failed to overcome the difficulties which clog the entrance to every new and serious pursuit. Now, I found her with an inquisitive mind, and keen appetite for the bread of knowledge. She was most desirous of becoming acquainted with whatever in science might render her useful to others; whatever in literature might correct and purify her taste; and whatever in religion might assist her in rightly conceiving of herself, of God, and of immortality. With such dispositions, the work of instruction was easy and delightful. We had many desultory conversations on mental improvement, while together; and I engaged, on our re-union in London, to become, as our

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mutual opportunities should allow, her teacher; thus adding one more tie to the many which bound us together.

On the whole, I think the intercourse of this period was as profitable as it was pleasing. It was beneficial to me, to witness on another, the holy and exalting power of religion; and I was unspeakably gratified to find, that a beloved sister was advancing with her growth, in every thing lovely and excellent. My pleasure, too, was without a check, as I daily saw her health improving; and that it might be as fully confirmed as possible, it was determined that her stay should be prolonged, beyond the original time, indefinitely. After introducing her, therefore, to a few kind friends, I left her, and returned to the metropolis.

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CHAPTER VI.

EMBARRASSMENT. 1810.

UNQUESTIONABLY, the most sacred duty of the biographer is, to *state the truth.* I do not understand, however, that in the most conscientious discharge of this duty, it is necessary to state *all* that is true. Much that is trivial and detached may be suppressed, not only without injury, but with advantage; the character of the individual, in its formation and progress, may be the more completely exhibited, as the artist gives a more striking likeness, by getting rid of useless habiliments. On the contrary, every thing may be told, and told with the utmost particularity, while the verisimilitude of the person is lost, and the *general impression*, arising from the

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narrative, is substantially false. The leading concern, therefore, of the biographer will be, to give that place, and that weight to every event connected with the subject of his memoir, which shall leave on the mind the truest impression of the living character. Good taste will prevent him accumulating minutæ, which, if they do not reveal, will incumber his portrait; and integrity will forbid him concealing any occurrences, how delicate soever in themselves, which are indispensable to its truth.

In this record of my sister, I am certainly desirous of being, not her eulogist, but her biographer. And, if the previous remarks are somewhat apologetical, it is because, in attempting to support that appellation, I find it necessary to enter on difficult ground. Were it a mere question of feeling, I might possibly avoid it altogether; but as it forms an important passage in her life, and contributes largely to the progress of her mind, I have no option. While, however, I notice occurrences

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which are acknowledged to be delicate, I hope they will be treated delicately; and then I am convinced, in discharging the duties of the historian, I shall not violate those of the brother.

When I left Martha, at a distance from home, it was with every sentiment of satisfaction. Her health was advancing, her spirit was happy, and she was beneath the protection of christian friendship. But, alas! where, in this world, shall we find perfect safety? Trial and snares cross the most secure and retired path, like the gossamer web in Autumn, as quickly and as imperceptibly!

Amongst the persons to whom I had introduced Martha, during my stay, was a young man, an acquaintance of mine. He had seen her twice or thrice in my presence; and I had no idea of his seeking her society on my departure. He did, however, call upon her; in the first instance, perhaps, from regard to me; but afterwards for his own gratification. He introduced her to his family, and sought

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opportunities of meeting her elsewhere. He was of an open temper, and ardent passions. He had been lately interested in religious objects; and he talked of them with liberty and feeling. He was a professed admirer of the poets; some of his favourite passages he read to her; and others he extracted and put into her possession. In a word, he showed her most marked and particular attentions.

Martha was still in her seventeenth year. Her thoughts had been as little directed to matrimony, or the preliminary steps to it, as those of any—the most pure of her sex. On this subject, she had all the innocency of the dove, but without the sagacity of the serpent; she knew little of human character, beyond what she read in her own heart. Her modesty had always restrained her young friends from making it the matter of conversation, or merriment; and her imagination had not been inflamed, her mind perverted, by the perusal of extravagant and ill-principled fictions.

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These attentions, therefore, while they were such as might be offered indiscriminately to any young person, were received with simplicity and gratitude, as a proof of respect for her beloved relative; and when they became an unequivocal expression of something more, she was anxious and disconcerted. She was most desirous of shunning them altogether; but the difficulties of her situation seemed to make it impossible.

It happened, that a matronly person, who had recommended herself to Martha by her kindness and piety, had early noticed these attentions. By many hints she had dropped, Martha was aware of this, and she thought the best use to be made of it was to confess the sense of impropriety which possessed her, and to crave the advice of one who had been a mother and a wife, on the best means of meeting the difficulty.

But this good lady, with very slender capacity to give advice on such delicate subjects, was one of those persons who

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have an avowed pleasure in *bringing young people together*. She was not, therefore, in the least inclined to confine her counsel within the limits which Martha had prescribed to it. She assumed at once, that Martha's uneasiness was quite unnecessary; and then descanted freely on the folly of discouraging an individual, to whom, and to whose connexions she could alledge no objections. Martha waived all remark in her reply, on the person himself, and contented herself with objecting on account of her youth; but "it was a good thing for young people to be early attached:" — her health — but "she was getting well every day:"—her separation from her parents—"her parents certainly ought to know, but there was time enough for that."

From the spirit of this advice, Martha's heart involuntarily shrunk; but it left her more irresolute what to do, and not less uneasy at remaining as she was. She pondered anxiously her situation; and the more it was the subject of reflection, the

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more she felt, that the notice taken of her was such as, in her present circumstances, she ought not to sanction; while it was of such a character as to make it difficult to decline, without an assumption which modesty forbade her to make. She did not blame the cause of her secret perplexities; but she became increasingly embarrassed and unhappy.

No alternative seemed left to her, except hastening her return to London. She, therefore, wrote to her parents, enlarging on the improved state of her health, and begging, that, as the end of her visit was so well accomplished, she might be restored to the bosom of her family. The required permission was granted; and Martha, with a glad heart, fled, like the wandering nestling, from a sense of exposure and solitariness, to the warm embraces of her family.

Martha had reached her home, but failed to find all that quiet happiness which till now was identified with the place. Her distress while at C——, and her eagerness

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to return to her friends, had convinced her that her mind was perfectly free; alas! she was not prepared to see that this very eagerness gave alarming testimony to the contrary. She was, therefore, surprised and concerned to find, when she had realized the separation which was at once to deliver her from thought and feeling, till thought and feeling should be proper, her mind involuntarily reverted to the scenes she had quitted; and that occasionally, the recollections it presented, would raise a sigh or a tear which she strove to suppress, and could not.

In her prospective return too, it had been her spontaneous purpose to confer fully with her parents. But now she possessed the opportunity of doing so, she had no wish to employ it. Habit and conscience often urged her to it; yet when about to make the attempt, her tongue was locked, her lips were sealed; and she met their unwelcome pleadings with the best excuses the case could supply. She would urge upon herself, that she had

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really nothing to say—that nothing might ever come of it—that if any thing should, it would necessarily first reach her father—and then would be the time to explain—and till then she would resolve not to think of it—and the only sure way to avoid thinking, was to avoid speaking. Thus she sought to delay what it was so difficult to do. It was too late for her to see that her excuses were vain; that it would have been easy to confer with her friends, had her thoughts been wholly uninterested; or that the very difficulty in now doing so, was a powerful argument against further delay. Alas for us! how few are the precious moments of reason. They are only those in which passion is dormant; when this sorceress is awakened, she casts her illusive lights on all things—she blinds the sight of the weak, and discolours that of the strongest.

The act of separation, which is commonly such a touchstone of friendship, was operating very differently on another party. Martha had declined entering on any cor-

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respondence, without the approbation of her parents; and of course, it was the business of the person seeking such intercourse, to make the application. She had abundant reason to think the event of such an application would quickly be tried; but, from whatever cause, weeks passed away, and nothing transpired.

The worst effect of this omission on Martha was, that it supplied her with an excuse for allowing her mind to return to the subject. She persuaded herself that she was indifferent what reply might be given to the question by her friends, if it were only fairly proposed. But while it was not put, and while she could not entertain a doubt of the honour of the person who was bound to put it, she thought herself at liberty to recur to the state of suspense; she did not ask herself, whether she could distinguish between the *state* of suspense and the *subject* of it.

Martha had promised a correspondence with the lady, to which a reference has already been made; and she now looked

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to it as the likely means of delivering her from suspense. On her part, there was a careful avoidance of the subject; but on the side of her friend, this was not expected, nor, to say the truth, desired. Her letters were now received with an eagerness for which Martha was not anxious to account; and, if they did not contain some allusions to a nameless party, she was more disappointed than she was willing to admit.

This unacknowledged expectation, however, had not to suffer much of disappointment. Her friend always met the subject as a favourite one. She was the more earnest in it, because Martha had, once for all, dismissed it, and begged that it might be forgotten. She contended, that if the step which it was honourable to take, had not been taken, it must be ascribed to an adequate cause. She said every thing she knew, and imagined more, as likely to produce a delay. And she uniformly communicated whatever she could, that

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was calculated to impress the mind favourably of the party and his connexions.

This was sincerely and kindly done, but not wisely. It was giving stimulants where sedatives are required. It was keeping the attention awake to a subject on which it should have been induced to sleep. In this medium, too, she could dwell on it with more of self-deception—it was *her friend's letters* for which she was looking. And these letters occurring at short intervals, not only kept her thoughts alive, but imparted to them, from time to time, most dangerous nourishment.

Our passions, those enemies to our peace, assail us, like the Roman gladiator, with a sword in one hand, and a snare in the other; and the sword is often brandished only to allure the attention from the snare which is to overthrow us. Martha might have been prepared by her simplicity and delicacy, to resist any open attack; but her inexperience and suscep-

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tibility blinded her to the wiles of her foe. Her feet, therefore, had been, from the first, imperceptibly entangled; and what from uneasiness, suspense, disappointment, and the injudicious counsels of friendship, the nets were only gathered more inextricably about her.

As month after month rolled over her, Martha had power more clearly to watch the workings of her troubled bosom. Reflection was forced upon her; and as she reflected, she was carried unconsciously to the conclusion, that she had been disposed to give a preference to one who was unworthy of it. Had this conclusion, heart-sickening as it was, been admitted, it might have roused every thing feminine in her character, to a victorious struggle; but it was resisted and put down. It was too foreign to her heart readily to admit a suspicion of a character, which had won her esteem by its show of piety, generosity, and feeling.

Yet, while she refused to recognize this conclusion, her conduct began to be regu-

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lated by its influence. The thought of her heart not only shrunk more decidedly from every other eye, but shunned instinctively her own observation. It breathed no sigh, shed no tear, preferred no complaint, uttered no reproach; but it preyed silently, constantly, upon her inmost spirit.

Martha strove, powerfully strove, to be to her friends what she had uniformly been; but her *choice* was to conceal herself from all mankind. Her solitude, however, was without restraints, and she could no longer fill it with useful pursuits. She would sit, with an introverted eye, from hour to hour, poring on the conflict of her feelings, till she sank into reverie and abstraction. Her bright morning of joy had been suddenly overcast; and all the gilded prospects which opened to the eye of youth in endless perspective, were enveloped in a thick gloom, that she thought would never more be dispersed!

Martha uttered no reproaches; nor is

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her brother disposed to employ the language of reproach; the subject is too sacred. But a *principal end* of introducing this chapter would be lost, if it were not rendered *cautionary* and *instructive*. Those, I trust, of Martha's sex and age, would be especially open to receive benefit from this portion of her history. Let them accept all common attention, with that unconstrained kindness which is their proper reward; but the moment these attentions would assume another character, let them pause and decide on the state of their mind. If the mind is averse to them, let them be steadily discouraged till they cease; and if there is no objection arising to them, let the voice of parents, or, in the want of them, of some judicious friend, be solicited; and let them advance not a step further until they have the sanction of those whose authority they are bound to respect, and possess an exact understanding on the ground of their intercourse. If these proprieties of conduct are not thought of by the suitor, there is

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much the greater need they should be regarded by the person solicited.

Where the judgment has once decided, be severely jealous of any after-pleading of feeling. From no loose ideas of honourable intentions — suitable connexion —difficulty of resisting — sentiments of humanity—invincibility of passion—or a thousand other imaginings—allow yourself to hesitate or to trifle. You are on enchanted ground. The inclination that leads you there is likely to leave you there till you are fascinated and ensnared. In such temptation your safety is in flight, and the flight is for your life! "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Let not the thoughts revert to the forbidden object. There are some objects, which, like the Geysers of Iceland, while we admire them, scald us.

It must be conceded, that the kindest parents, in the very exercise of their kindness, sometimes err in the treatment of this delicate subject From the manner in which they have too often seen it held

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up to young and innocent minds, as the end and scope of all education, of all hope, and of all effort, they have turned away in disgust, and have not stopped till they arrived in the opposite extreme. They have wholly proscribed the subject in conversation; they have exercised a visible jealousy over every thing that led to it, without assigning their reasons; and if the feelings connected with it have, in general life, at any time, risen to their view, they have submitted them, at once, either to ridicule or to condemnation.

Now, there may be much more of good principle and feeling in the one case than the other; but it may be doubted, whether, in their consequences, both are not equally injurious. Certainly, the determined avoidance of the subject cannot prepare the young and unsuspicious to meet it with prudence and wisdom; and the slightest knowledge of the human heart will convince us, that such a mode is not likely to exclude it from the thoughts.

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To our nature, alas! the forbidden fruit is ever the most inviting.

It will be well, too, if, when the hour of trial comes, such a method do not dispose our child to withhold her confidence. She would, no doubt, violate her duty in doing so. But if, with every thing to encourage her, there is so much to be overcome, before she can commit her secret thoughts to her dearest friend, what must be the power of filial devotion to enable her to approach a subject which has always been made inaccessible, and to reveal sentiments which have never been regarded with sympathy? Is it wonderful, if, under such circumstances, the young heart has shrunk from its duty for the first time; and thus lost, in its deepest need, the advice and confidence of the most natural and valuable of friends?

May not the better course be, in this case, as it is allowed to be in almost every other, that which is most direct and open? Since the thoughts will run in this direction, more or less, is it not better to pro-

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vide them with a safe and proper channel, rather than, by vainly resisting their progress, to cause a most dangerous accumulation? Let not the subject become a topic of usual discourse; but let this be avoided, not by a formal prohibition, but by the general tone of parental authority and character. On the fit occasion, let it be met with candour and seriousness. Let it be stript of all mystery, that curiosity may have no nourishment. Let it have its fair weight amongst the events of life. Balance against its fascinations, its responsibility; and against its promises of happiness, the hazards to which it exposes that happiness. Let there be sufficient familiarity on the subject between the parent and child, that she may feel the way to it accessible whenever she may desire to use it. Let her just sentiments be approved; her extravagant ones qualified; and her every sentiment, how foolish and trivial soever, be sure of a patient hearing, and a sympathising heart.

Particularly it is of moment, that this

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confidential intercourse should not be postponed to too late a period. The young mind has often thought and felt much on the subject, before the guiding hand has directed it to those reflections which may fortify it in the hour of attack. It is needless to say, it has been premature; then its affectionate guardian must condescend to be premature likewise. Wisdom will always prefer the means of prevention to those of cure; but in this case they have a stronger claim to preference than in almost any other. The remedy may be applied to the wounded spirit with *hope;* but the lessons of wisdom falling on a heart still at rest, shall distil as the dew, and reward the strongest *confidence.*

In conclusion, what shall be said of those young persons, who, bounding fresh on the novel scenes of life, and intent only on their own gratification, trouble the peace of many a happy spirit, by successively offering such attentions as nothing could justify but their continuance and rightful consummation? The *least* that can

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be said, is, that such a course begins without honour, and ends without satisfaction. Is it to be pleaded, that the intentions were honourable; that no promise was violated; and that the most that can be censured is thoughtlessness? Let the plea have all the weight it deserves; but let it be remembered, however, that many a promise may be made, such as heaven will sanction, and every honest mind consider binding, where not a line is written—not a word uttered. If honourable intentions are to be urged, let it be understood that these only exist as they are sustained by honourable conduct; and that he who can pay flattering attentions to one person, which he would not to any other person in like circumstances, and carelessly transfer them to a second, may, indeed, possess good principles, but in this instance is not actuated by them.

Can it be endured, that on so serious a subject, utter thoughtlessness is to be pleaded in extenuation? Because I judge myself secure, am I to be careless of the

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danger of another? Because I can trifle, am I to trifle on, indifferent to the wounds I may probably inflict on a mind less gross and more susceptible than my own? Thoughtlessness! Inconsideration! Let him who, in reckless inconsideration, wantonly wounds a tender and innocent spirit, and eventually seeks his connubial happiness elsewhere, enjoy it as he may! There is a hand above him that registers, in fearful characters, the deed of folly and of negligence. And O, if there be any sorrow, natural to our suffering state, that makes its way direct to heaven, it must be that pure, deep, unutterable sorrow of the virgin heart, which scorns to tarry on earth, and which arises from insincere professions and inconstant attachments!

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CHAPTER VII.

MENTAL EXERCISES. 1810—1811.

SENSIBILITY has had her honours done by a thousand hands, and her praises sung by a thousand voices. With her admiring votaries, she is the substance of every virtue, and the soul of every grace. Were such expressions simply extravagant, they might pass; but as they are hurtful, it is necessary to correct them. Let her young and fond admirers know, then, that sensibility is a gift, like some we read of in Arabian story, of doubtful character; and which will benefit or injure us *as it is used*. As the handmaid of an enlightened mind, she bears the key which commands the richest treasures of earth and heaven; as the mistress of a weak and enslaved judgment, she "shows the path, and leads

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the way," to chambers of vexation, anguish, and despair. Without sensibility there can be no enjoyment; without something more, and better, our very enjoyments are poisonous.

An excess of sensibility was the weakness of Martha's character; but she was not yet aware of it. Already we have seen something of its unfavourable and dangerous influence; and we must continue to trace it in more serious connexions.

The distress of the heart is not limited to place or subject; wherever it may spring, it spreads itself over the whole soul, and all its engagements. Happy as Martha had recently been in her religious enjoyments, her happiness was deeply affected by the present state of her mind. She could no longer engage in the most sacred exercises with her accustomed pleasure. She had lost her earnestness in prayer, her quietude in meditation, her joy in the house of God, and her elasticity in performing the works of love and mercy.

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Her thoughts were distracted; her will was fluctuating; her imagination was wayward and rebellious; and her heart was restless. The restlessness of her spirit was communicated to every service of the closet and the sanctuary, and she became growingly weary of exercises, which her conscience could not approve, and by which her mind was not tranquillized.

So painful a state of mind was dangerously aggravated by Martha's susceptibility. This temper obscured the lights that still remained on her path, and made the darkness such as could be felt. It exaggerated the dangers of her situation, and discouraged her from seeking deliverance. It magnified the character of her offences, and forbade her to lift her hands for pardon. It debilitated her resolutions, resisted her hopes, and multiplied her sorrows. It made what was perplexed, inexplicable; what was gloomy, terrible; and what was bad, worse. This very temper which, in her happy moments, had disposed her to dwell unduly on the divine

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Mercy, now, when its consolations were wanting, presented to her only distorted and hopeless images of the Divine justice.

In this dark and dreary day of the soul, ignorant as she was of the Christian conflict, assailed by a condemning conscience, and weakened and depressed by her constitutional infirmity, Martha's hope had perished had it been of human mould, or sustained by human energy. But her hope was divine and scriptural. It was cast down, but not destroyed. It was often conquered, but it continued to resist. The winds blew against it; the rains fell upon it; the floods swelled and raged about it, but it remained,—for it was built upon a rock.

Martha, in the first reverse of her experience, was little disposed to favour the struggles of this living and irrepressible principle within her. She discredited its suggestions; she questioned its nature; and was inclined rather to yield herself to the calm of despondency, than continue in the agitations of conflict. Her heart had

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been paralysed by fear which her sensibility had nurtured; it was worn and exhausted by ceaseless warfare; and she seemed resolved to seek rest somewhere, though it should be on the ground of an enemy. The utmost that hope could do for her, was to make her state less dangerous, without making it more easy; it kept her unwilling awake to a sense of her exposure and unhappiness.

Towards the close of the year, Martha revealed her distress to me, most carefully avoiding any remark which might have led me to what she was determined to conceal. We had not been much together since we parted at B——; and the contrast of her present with her former appearance struck me painfully. Her feverish hand, her flushed complexion, and her agitated frame, told me that disease had renewed its influence; and that her mind was robbed of that serene joy which possessed it so fully, when it was our privilege to hold daily and free communion. I have no distinct recollections of our con-

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verse on this occasion; but the substance of it is on my memory; and as far as it is to my purpose, I shall bring it under notice.

It will immediately be seen, that in giving advice to my sister, I was in similar circumstances with the medical attendant prescribing for a patient, who purposely withholds one half of his case, and yet expects relief. I was likewise discouraged by my limited acquaintance with the changes and trials of Christian experience. The most I could do was, not to apply the *best remedies* with the greatest skill, but to apply, with a gentle hand, those remedies which I had lately found effectual to my own healing.

I soon perceived that Martha's chief sorrow arose from the serious doubts which possessed her, on the reality of her religious professions. She had incautiously mingled her hopes with her enjoyments; and now that these were gone, she was tempted to think nothing was left. That she had been deceived herself, and had

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deceived others; and that her religion had been superficial and transitory as the morning cloud which passes away, and is seen no more.

Without offering any distinctions between the joys that are false and those that are real and scriptural, which might have perplexed her, I attempted, at once, to shew, that her present desponding conclusions were not authorized by her existing state of mind. To accomplish this object it was my concern to illustrate the christian course as a course of inward warfare. I saw that, with most young disciples, Martha, while she admitted the doctrine of a continued conflict in the christian life, had not fully realised it to herself. When, therefore, this portion of her creed was reduced to experimental certainty, her faith and hope were unsettled; she was led to imagine that some trial had happened to her which was not common to the saints.

I insisted that her case was not peculiar, but common to the people of God.

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That conflict was not an *accident* of Christian life, but essential to it; that it belonged not to the commencement of this life, but that it ran through every stage of it; that it was not a conflict merely with the world, with the powers of darkness, or with the disorderly appetites of the body; but that it was a deep, inward, unceasing warfare against *ourselves*—our original and strongly-rooted principles, desires, and propensities. I supported my remarks by the masterly and admirable exposition of the subject in the VIIth of Romans; and maintained, with the Apostle, that a constant and decided conflict of the spirit against the flesh, of grace against sin, of the new nature against the old, painful as it may be, is both a more *safe* and *accessible* evidence of christian character, than the most assured hopes or abounding joys.

My next effort was, to prevent her anxious search into the *past* for the proofs of her sincerity, when her thoughts might be profitably directed to her present duty. I urged that it was really of little moment,

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whether she could or could not obtain this satisfaction, compared with *believing now* on the Son of God. That, what *we have been* is not to discourage the sinner, or to prevent the saint, from making an immediate application to the Saviour. That religion in its very nature is a continued intercourse with Him; it is living in Him, moving in Him, and deriving from Him, habitually, sanctity and grace. That we are always to be "coming" unto Him, as though we had never come before, confessing our sins, reposing on his righteousness, and imploring his salvation.

I pointed out, with earnestness, that if these views were important in every state of the Christian life, they were particularly so to her, under her present darkness of mind and perplexity of evidence. I enforced the necessity, without seeking for obscured evidences, without waiting for an improved experience, of her simply acknowledging her felt demerit and sin, and pleading the unfailing promises of mercy to the unworthy; and I assured her, with

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the confidence of proof, that this would greatly assist in baffling her adversaries, and breaking the spell which her distressing fears had cast upon her.

In conjunction with these observations, I referred her to some parts in Newton's Letters, Stafford's Sermons on the VIIth of Romans, and Gurnall's Christian Armour, which I had recently read with advantage, that she might peruse them at leisure.

Martha's doubts, however, were not entirely confined to her *personal interest* in the blessings of revelation; they were sometimes extended to the truth and genuineness of revelation itself. When her enemies could not succeed in wholly driving her hopes from their hold, they sought to shake the very foundations on which they rested. Hitherto, Martha had given her faith to revelation on the force of its internal and experimental evidence. It had revealed her thoughts, and given her the express image of her character; she had tasted and felt its proposed blessedness. This was the most efficient of all

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evidence, and she had been satisfied with it. But now, when she was tempted to doubt the reality of all she had felt and enjoyed, she was led occasionally to ask, whether the very truths themselves, on which she had built, might not also be illusive and unauthorised.

A sense of ignorance produces timidity. Martha was aware that she had neglected the general evidences by which the Christian religion commends itself to our judgment; and the suggestions of doubt were the more frequent and troublesome. Her memory too took the colour of her mind, and quickened into activity some commonplace objections of infidelity, which had been uttered in her hearing at a considerable distance of time for her annoyance; but which had been so dormant, that she scarcely thought they had a place in her recollection.

It was of vital importance to her peace of mind, that from this subject at least all doubt should be excluded. And as it was simply a sincere and just decision on the

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weight of testimony supplied that was necessary, nothing seemed required except a clear and combined exhibition of those external evidences by which revelation has been sustained against all attack, and has gathered confidence from examination, while human creeds and carnal religions have perished by the very hands that wove them.

As far as conversation would admit, I touched on the leading and most tangible proofs which the subject affords; carefully dwelling on those which had most impressed my own mind. I then put into her hands successively, Doddridge's Sermons on the subject; Halyburton on Natural and Revealed Religion; Skelton on Deism; with two or three anonymous articles on the truth of Revelation, that her thoughts might continue some time in one line of reflection, and that the object to be contemplated might be studied in a variety of lights and aspects.

Martha was much interested in this intercourse. I did not expect her to be

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suddenly relieved; but her countenance was somewhat clearer, and her heart evidently lighter than at the moment of our meeting. I had a stronger conviction than formerly, that an indulgence of excessive feeling was likely to be a snare to her; and indeed I could not avoid ascribing her present distress principally, if not entirely to this undue sensibility, operated on by a growing perception of human frailty and sinfulness. It was a favourable opportunity, and I resolved to acquaint her with my impressions.

Martha had said, she wished to know the worst of herself.

"The worst I know of you," I replied, is, "that you have too much feeling."

"O brother, I wish it were!" she said incredulously; "surely we cannot have too much feeling, if it is right feeling."

"But, my dear, if right feeling, as you term it, is *excessive*, it becomes *wrong* feeling."

"But one cannot always govern one's feelings," she continued; "and is it not

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better to have sometimes an excess of feeling and suffer for it, than to sink into indifference and selfishness?"

"Yet why," I replied, "should you determine on choosing one of two extremes, when there is a middle path of safety and comfort open to us? I do not commend indifference; I do not blame sensibility; I condemn the *excess* of it."

"I beseech you," I continued, with greater earnestness, in these words, or words to this effect: "I beseech you, my dear, not to trifle with this evil. I consider it to be your natural infirmity; and if you nurture and indulge it, innocent as it appears in your eyes, it will be as a viper in your bosom. I cannot help ascribing all your present uneasiness and sorrow to this source—indeed I cannot!"

Martha heard a voice in these words which I could not hear. They sank into her heart, and she became thoughtful. I knew not that they bore so large an application as she was making; but I considered that her reflections, once fixed on

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the subject, would be of abundantly more advantage to her than any additional remarks I could offer. That her thoughts might not be prematurely disturbed, I left her to the meditations she evidently courted.

Martha's reflections were not those of an evening; they ran through several days and weeks of this period. All our conversations had been interesting to her; but her attention was especially arrested by the closing one, which, from her peculiar situation, fell, like a sudden gleam of light, on a weakness of character, which, until then she had considered an excellence. She found it difficult to receive the unpleasant truth; and her pampered feelings had innumerable specious pleas to urge in their own favour. But Martha was always ingenuous with herself; and her indulgence passed into jealousy, her jealousy led to watchfulness, and her watchfulness to detection. She saw how easily an ungoverned sensibility might mislead the judgment, betray the heart,

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and undo the character which, in all things else, may be truly admirable. More than this, she saw that a sensibility, refined and noble as it may appear, which is not under the rule and direction of high religious principle, is only another name for that gross selfishness which it professes to scorn and reprobate.

With this discovery arose a sense of duty. A disposition which was evil in itself and injurious in its consequences, was not to be tolerated in a mind set against all known sin. Martha, therefore, declared hostility to it in all its excesses. But, on a review of her conduct, or rather want of conduct and activity, in carrying out this resolution immediately, she was induced to fear she had mistaken a *declaration* of warfare for war itself.

However, the highest elevation is to be gained step by step. Martha had made one important step in detecting her weakness; another not less important in resolving to overcome it; the next step was to be taken unconsciously.

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Few habits are more difficult of conquest than that of listless reverie. Though contrary to her natural disposition, Martha had indulged in it so long, as an opiate to her sorrows, that it nearly assumed the force of habit. This habit was to be imperceptibly weakened. The books I had put into her hand for perusal, could only be read in the hours of retirement. As her progress would be the subject of inquiry, she was obliged to read them; and as their contents would be brought into conversation, she must give her best attention to them. These considerations, united with her sisterly affection, and the weight of the questions to be discussed, brought her mind to the work.

The exercise, once begun, became easier and frequently pleasant. The authors she was daily consulting, were treating the most serious subjects in the most serious manner; and gradually their spirit was diffused over her's. Her mind became calm and reflective. When not engaged in reading, she no longer resigned herself

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to a wandering imagination; but endeavoured so to engage her thoughts on the past, as to become better acquainted with herself, and the dangers of her situation.

The agitation of the passions affords a valuable opportunity for self-knowledge. The heart at ease, like a fountain at rest, appears pure, transparent, and lovely in reflecting the loveliness of heaven; but let it be violently disturbed, and its turbid waters will throw up to our sight nothing but mire and dirt. Martha had now sufficient command of herself to dwell on the painful, but subsiding, exercises of her mind; and they afforded her some new and deeper perceptions of her religious character. She saw much more of the natural unbelief, ingratitude, and selfishness of the heart than formerly. She saw how little submission she had to the will of God, when that submission was actually tried; and how little reliance on the Divine goodness, when that goodness ceased to be apparent to the eye of flesh. Now that all this was so evident, she wondered that

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it had not been seen before. Her blindness and folly seemed equalled only by her other iniquities; and her spirit sank into the nothingness of deep and genuine humility.

Meanwhile, the year waned away to its close. To Martha it brought, not only those impressions of which every reflective mind is conscious, but the sacred recollections of her covenant dedication, at the termination of a former year. The period was sanctified to her profit. Her mind was touched by the frailty of life, and awed by the approach of eternity. She was reminded of all her follies and sins, and confessed them in all the tenderness of grief. As she sank in penitence, she rose in confidence. She remembered the years of the Most High, and encouraged herself in her God. Her thoughts dwelt on the sacrifice and merit of her Saviour, with most vivid sense of their unspeakable value; and she once more gave herself up to Him whom she was bound to serve. Hope, like the bow of promise, gleamed

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on the darkness of the retiring storm, and told of brighter days to come.

The following extracts of this date may serve farther to illustrate what she felt, and how she was rising above her feelings; how she was abased under an increased conviction of her sinfulness, and possessed of higher sentiments of the Redeemer's excellence and grace:—

— "I thought this letter would have been composed of the language of despair; but, through the rich mercy of God, hope is again lifting up her head. O for a heart to love and praise Him, who has given us the valley of Achor for a door of hope!

— "I seem like the Israelites on their coming up from Egypt. If they looked behind them, there was Pharaoh with his host; if before them, there was the Red Sea—there was no way of deliverance. Instead of crying to the Lord, they began to murmur. But the Lord did not deal with them as they deserved; and I would hope he will not with me. O Lord, return, return, and take possession

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of our hearts, and enable us to live and die in thy service and to thy glory!

— "This morning my distracted mind was much supported by the sweet promise—'With every temptation He will make a way for our escape, that we may be *able to bear it*.' It was a beam of hope when my mind was sinking. I had before thought there was no passage in the word of God exactly suited to my present state of trial."

— "What a sweet prayer is that of Peter's when ready to sink—'Lord, save, or I perish!' I never saw so much beauty in it before! But when, in trying to avoid one danger, we find ourselves falling into another, it will make us cry in *earnest*—Lord, save, or we perish!—O to lie low, *very low*, at the feet of Jesus, *deeply* sensible of our own weakness!

— "When I look within, I find—what shall I say? Ingratitude is too cold a name for the baseness of our conduct towards God. I feel what I deserve; but this leads me to Calvary. There the mystery

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of the Divine forbearance is unveiled. Yes! God hears our Advocate on high, and will for ever hear. Herein is love!

> Not to be thought of but with tides of joy,
> Not to be mentioned but with shouts of praise.

— "My mind is dark and carnal. But what a mercy to have a desire (though a very faint one) for *complete* deliverance from sin.

— "My mind is, as usual, dark and indifferent. O that it were with me as in months that are past! Yet is not the winter necessary as well as the summer? But I am ready to say, It is winter all the year with me. O that spring time and harvest may come to me. Hope beams while I am writing, and I am ready to affirm, that the summer will return.

— "I feel not only lukewarm, cold, and indifferent, but full of rebellion, pride, perverseness, and ingratitude. I am weary of myself; but is it from hatred to sin, or the accusations of conscience? You are ready to say, Is there *no* balm in

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Gilead? Is there *no* physician there?—Yes, there is! And if I did not hope that that balm would one day be applied to my heart, I should be *quite* in despair. But when I attempt to pray for it, a lethargy seems to hang on me, and prevent me. I doubt not the willingness of Jesus to save, but I doubt my willingness to be saved in *his way*. O blessed Saviour, have mercy on a wretched sinner, who feels her weakness, but who is too proud to own it—who does not like to stoop to come to Thee, as possessing nothing but sin. Take away my pride, my selfishness, my sin!

— "I cannot help taking up my pen to invite you to praise the Lord with me and for me. I do hope the Lord is again reviving his work; but I rejoice with trembling, because of this body of sin and death. I have felt the perverseness of my will subdued; I have been enabled to bless God for my trials. I have had more pleasure in reading the Scriptures, and I hope more love to the Saviour O the goodness of God! Will he yet be gra-

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cious? Will he again grant me the smiles of his countenance, after all my abuse of his mercies? O for deepest humility! O that redeeming love may henceforth be my theme!

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CHAPTER VIII.

RESOLUTION. 1811.

The mind is like the rocking-stone, a baby-hand may set it in motion; but the might of the mightiest cannot readily bring it to rest. Martha's peaceful spirit had been agitated by what was in itself a trivial occurrence; yet the master-hand of religion was necessary to rectify the judgment, and allay the perturbation of the passions. Even in the application of this power, *time* is generally to be brought into the account; for the passion will often remain in motion after the cause is removed, as the sea is seen to roll and break when the winds have ceased.

The fulness of Martha's distress had arisen from religious causes. She had lost all pleasure in those duties which

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were so delightful. She had prayed without life, worshipped without composure. Her thoughts had been confused and distracted. Distraction had brought darkness, darkness had brought guilt, guilt had brought doubt. She had questioned her whole profession; and, to use her own words, had concluded that her iniquities had separated between her and her God. Under such impressions, she was not aware of the influence of any *secondary* sorrow; but no sooner were her fears appeased on this principal subject, than her mind was alive to meaner anxieties.

Her thoughts involuntarily reverted to those circumstances which had originated all her sorrows. Accustomed to run in this channel, they could not, at once, be completely diverted, and there were peculiarities in the case which invited them in this direction. Particularly the continued representations of her friend at C—— had this tendency. She always touched on the subject, more or less, in her correspondence, and always with the same con-

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fidence. She was sure that all was right —that a declaration would be made—and she assigned specious reasons for its delay, some of which, indeed, would have had considerable weight on the most impartial judgment.

It was impossible that her mind should remain uninfluenced by such assurances. Martha was desirous of believing them, not on her own account, but for the sake of another. She thought that she cared not for the result of the affair; she was only anxious that her opinion of the party should not be changed. In defiance, however, of her gentle and unsuspecting nature, that opinion was insensibly altering. If, indeed, any unwelcome suggestions arose to her mind, she would repress them, and exclaim—"It cannot be—it cannot be;" yet her thoughts shrunk from the confidence which these negatives implied; they hung in doubt—in doubt of the truth and honour of one, whose conduct seemed to affect her estimate of human nature generally. "This

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suspense!" she would say—"this suspense—any thing is better than this suspense!"

These were only the occasional wanderings of a mind not as yet fully controlled. But Martha now possessed as clear a perception of her state as any one can pretend to, where the feelings have been at all engaged. She acknowledged to herself the weakness of her character; and pursued it in all its most dangerous tendencies. In the trial which still entangled her straying thoughts, she saw and felt distinctly what was to be done. That to banish suspense, she must destroy expectation; and that expectation was to be destroyed, not by balancing powerful reasons against the weaker, but by the exclusion of the subject altogether from thought. Religion, which had made her way plain before her face, gave her strength to enter on it, thorny and rough as it was to fleshly sensations.

The first step in this course, led her to dispose of her C—— correspondence. She

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had valued it for its own sake, and it was difficult for her to abandon it, associated, as it had been, with many marks of Christian friendship. But it had injured her, and it would still injure her. The very sense of her weakness was her strength; for it would not allow her, in this struggle, to leave any known advantage in the hands of her enemy. Her resolution was taken, painfully taken; and, though not avowed, was soon accomplished. That correspondence quickly expires, to which one of the parties becomes indifferent.

The next measure was strictly to forbid herself the perusal of any book, which should have a tendency to feed those thoughts she was seeking to subdue. Happily, Martha did not see, in all its extent, the importance of this resolution; for she had no acquaintance with that class of books which abounds with an exuberant and vicious sentimentality. But she had found, in her present state of mind, works that were not only unexceptionable but truly excellent, dangerous to her. She

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considered her mind as diseased. What others might feed on with ease and advantage, would do her an injury; and therefore it was her duty to abstain. In this conviction she experienced a jealousy towards all works of imagination, whether in prose or rhyme; and avoided every thing that might excite sensibilities already too quick and pungent.

Finally, as a means of peculiar value, she resolved on keeping her attention fully engaged and pre-occupied. She had already felt the efficacy of this remedy; and sensible benefit urged her to a complete and persevering trial. Her salutary purpose was confirmed by a sentence in the letters of Henry Kirke White. He expresses it as his conviction, "that a life of full and constant employment, is the only safe or happy one." Martha had a strong sympathy with the character and sufferings of this young and amiable martyr to ambitious excitation; his opinion fastened on her memory, and frequently arose to her thoughts in the moment of need.

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Let it not be supposed that this moment of need never came, or came but seldom—that having once taken her resolution, it was without difficulty fulfilled. No—it cost her many and sharp encounters with herself. While she kept to the *letter* of her purpose, the *spirit* was not always attainable. If the hands were busily pressing the needle on its progress, the mind would wander from so mechanical a task. If she turned to the page of knowledge, it was often necessary to review, and review, the same few sentences she had read, to possess their meaning. If she thought, her thoughts would frequently make their way, by a most circuitous course, to the borders of forbidden ground; and her mutinous imagination would find resemblances in present objects, to things that were to be forgotten, where really nothing but disparity existed.

Amidst these discouragements, however, Martha remained steady to her purpose. Her mind was differently affected to what it had been in her former conflict. She

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was now satisfied that there was no collusion between her and her enemy. If she could not always forget, she always strove to forget. If she could not do all she desired, she desired to do all she ought. "To will was present with her;" and if she could not secure success, she was yet determined, in a strength above her own, to exercise resistance to the last. She had, therefore, for her companion, an approving conscience, which shed joy and confidence on her spirit. She partook of the blessedness of the man who resisteth temptation—almost the exclusive blessedness of this frail state. For all are exposed to temptation; the only difference is, between those who yield, and those who resist. Martha was enabled to resist; and she found that there is unspeakably more gratification in conquest than in compliance.

But the body will sometimes sink under a conflict for which the mind is adequate. The complicated distress and depression of Martha's spirit, during several months,

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operating on a frame, naturally delicate, had brought her health once more into a hazardous state. Medical advice was again sought, and again she was ordered into the country. At her especial desire, she was to go to Cheshunt; and arrangements were made for her and her young friend of that place to reside together.

Our parents allowed no great domestic event to transpire without an extraordinary act of domestic worship. As Martha's separation from her family was likely to be permanent, it would have been sufficient to authorize this service; but as their younger son was about to change his home for the business and temptation of the world, and as I was now looking to a settlement in some part of the church of God, the situation of the family appeared eminently eventful; and it excited a proportionate degree of parental anxiety.

This anxiety and care they sought, by prayer and supplication, to cast on Him who had so often shown that he cared for

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them. An evening was set apart for the solemn and delightful purpose. Dr. Winter, my mother's pastor, presided. He read, and paraphrased, the affecting passage, which records Jacob's departure from his father's house. He presented a most earnest and appropriate prayer, acknowledging the mercies of the family, and particularly noticing the circumstances of each of its members. The service, in its own nature, was interesting; and there was an unction upon our worship. The heart seemed enlarged to pray, the lips to sing praise, and the thoughts to meditate. The feeling of one was the feeling of all. It was the communion of saints, the communion of heaven. Our parents wept from gratitude, anxiety, and love; and their children wept in sympathy with their sentiments. Those tears were amongst the happiest shed by mortals! Martha and I frequently alluded to the prayers and pleasures of that night; it was marked by one of those monumental pillars erected and inscribed to the Divine Goodness, in

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the way of our pilgrimage, which it did the heart good to look back upon.

With the blessings of her family on her head, Martha went to Cheshunt, and took up her proposed residence with her friend. They were now alone, and had nothing to annoy their intercourse. The change was decidedly advantageous to my sister. She was not in solitude either by day or night; and this assisted her greatly in controlling her thoughts. Her friend, too, was as judicious as she was kind in her conduct. She diverted Martha's attention when it was sinking into herself; soothed her spirit beneath the occasional weight of nervous depression, and engaged her mind by a variety of nameless light and pleasing female occupations. In every thing she watched over her peace of mind, and conversed freely on those religious topics which were most likely to promote it. These attentions were medicinal. They worked insensibly, but daily and effectually. Martha, who could not underrate an expression of kindness, often

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spoke of them as invaluable to her at this period.

According to her ability, and beyond her ability, Martha strove to make her daily walks, walks of usefulness. She could not be happy in seeking her own benefit, unless it was connected with that of others. She reproached herself for having cooled in the works of benevolence, and anxiously sought to redeem the time. She introduced herself into the neighbouring cottages; and soon made friends to herself of the old and young. Many of the children she undertook to instruct; and pressed on the attention of the parents, in an easy and familiar way, the most important subjects of temporal and eternal interest. The sick of her own sex were objects of especial sympathy; and to all, and every where, she sought to distribute tracts, a favourite mode with her of endeavouring to do good. Much may be done by these means, at a very small expense; but Martha cheerfully consecrated to them her entire pocket-money.

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An undue ardour in accomplishing an important object, will sometimes endanger it. Martha had so sedulously improved the advantages of her situation, as almost to exclude herself from her beloved retirement. She was not aware, that by violent restraints, she might produce a revulsion of mind — that society might be rendered most wearisome, and retirement become an object of unappeasable solicitude.

Circumstances, however, supplied the place of experience. The season of the year advanced; her strength was considerably increased; and she felt herself able to go a sufficient distance from home, to retrace those quiet paths of which she had so pleasant a recollection. She thought that retirement in this mode, as it was most inviting, so it would be harmless. She had found that, in the presence of nature, she was "never less alone than when most alone;" her mind had objects to dwell upon — objects that could not injure it, and in which it delighted. She

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listened, therefore, to the yearnings of her spirit; and many a summer's evening she strolled away from human intercourse, to intercourse more safe and refined.

In communing with objects that led to reflection, it was not possible that her reflections should always preserve the character she desired. They would sometimes sink into gloom—sometimes start aside to interdicted things; but they were more commonly obedient to her will, and of a profitable tendency.

Martha looked on nature with an altered eye; but there was nothing in her aspect to offend the sight. Nature had heightened her gladness in her most happy days, and now she soothed a spirit struggling with its own weaknesses, and the sufferings of this mortal state. Her very pensiveness of mind, far from being an impediment, gave her a deeper relish for her charms. Her pent sensibilities flowed strongly into this channel; the more they were indulged, the more they asked indulgence; till, in the idea of the exercise

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being safe and salutary, it was likely to become excessive, and therefore hurtful. How difficult is it to say, how far the passions of the heart may go! How much more difficult, when they have reached the admitted boundary, to say—Thus far, but no farther!

Martha must be forgiven, if occasionally she lost all idea of hazard, in the fulness of enjoyments which were so congenial to her newly awakened tastes, and so calculated to raise her above worldly sorrow, or soften down its rough realities. The cup of joy had been too much alienated from her lips, and she drank of it with proportionate eagerness. Nature, in the glowing splendors of morning—nature, in the solemn infinitude of night; nature, rocked by convulsive storms—nature, reposing on the bosom of silence; nature, shrouded in folded clouds—nature, smiling under the blessed light of Heaven; nature, in all the freshness, bloom, and beauty of youth—nature, dishevelled, decrepit, and dying with age; nature, in all her endless

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varieties of form, of colour, and of aspect, was still familiar—still delightful.

Martha, at this period, did not think of delineating her feelings. It was enough for her to see, to feel, and to enjoy. She did not deceive herself into enjoyment that she might *record* it, and record it that she might *exhibit* it. It was enough that she was happy; and if in this respect she could think herself happier than many, she considered herself, not the superior person, but the more privileged.

The following lines, therefore, were written at a later date; but as they are evidently recollections of pleasures very much associated with this time, they find their proper place in this chapter. As a preface to these, and any other verses that may follow in the progress of the narrative, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that they are by no means introduced to claim for the subject of this memoir "all sorts of talent." Many lives have been so written, as if, whatever excellence might be proved to belong to the individuals, all would be vain, unless

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it could be shown that they *made verses;* and such contemptible specimens have sometimes been brought as evidence on this important particular, that the eye can scarcely meet measured lines in such connexion without ridicule.

In exposing myself to this danger, I have simply to state, that nothing of the kind is brought forward to prove that Martha had talent of any order or degree. It is brought forward, and with reluctance, to illustrate her *moral character;* and if the introduction of the pieces that appear were not thought necessary to the development of moral tastes and pleasures, they would certainly have been omitted, rather than risk a charge which, in too many cases, has been justly preferred.

NATURE.

Nature, I love thee! often hast thou lull'd
To calm repose my agitated breast;
Oft to these wond'ring eyes hast thou reveal'd
Such finish'd beauty, that, in rapture lost,

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My soul has seem'd inebriate with joy.
O, I have gazed upon the dewy morn,
Distilling fragrance from each shrub and flower,
All various, all harmonious, till I felt
New life within!—Exulting, I have watch'd
The golden radiance of the setting sun
Tinging the meads with glory—striking deep
Into the thickest shade, until my heart
Has glow'd beneath its beams. And I have watch'd
The evening star rise slowly; traced its course,
And felt as if I follow'd in its train.
Nor yet unfrequent by the lake's cool brink
I've sat sequester'd, panting for that peace
Of which it seem'd the emblem. Nothing there
Incongruous seem'd: around, the waving trees
Reflected in the stream. The distant bells
Just heard at intervals; and then the hum
Of the lone beetle, or the plaintive note
Of some sad songstress, spoiled of her young.
In such a scene, so tranquil, so retired,
Scarce has the pulse of life appear'd to beat;
And e'en the clock ofttimes has been so still,
As if it dare not vibrate. I have stood

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Gazing on thee, sweet Nature, till my soul
Has been uplifted with devoutest love
And holy admiration. I have long'd
For other powers to celebrate the praise
Of that infinite Wisdom, perfect Love,
And Pow'r omnipotent, which could devise,
Create, and then maintain the wondrous whole!
Thou dost proclaim his glory; yet art thou,
In all thy beauty, but the passing shade
Of that bright world where He himself resides!
Yet will I meditate upon thy charms—
With thee converse in all thy hidden grace.
Let me still see thy features, and direct
My heart beyond thyself, the fairest type,
To that celestial Eden, where my soul
Shall range at large, and see the Great Supreme!

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CHAP. IX.

MENTAL IMPROVEMENT. 1812-14.

THE wheel of Providence is constantly making its revolutions, and throwing up the most unexpected events. In the close of the year 1811, I accepted of a pastoral charge in London, and designed making a temporary residence with my parents. Martha could not allow herself to be out of the way. She forgot nature; contended that her health fully admitted of her return; flew to the arms of her friends; joined in the solemnities of ordination; and became an inhabitant with me of the same dwelling. Thus, the arrangement for her at Cheshunt, which was considered permanent, was comparatively of slight continuance.

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I remained with my sister, in these circumstances, upwards of two years. Instead of passing through this period week after week, or month after month, I shall endeavour to give a miniature sketch of the whole under a few leading particulars, not scrupling to carry an occasional remark into future life, if it will prevent the awkwardness of repetition. By this method, I expect, the reader will command a clearer and more compressed view of my sister's occupations and progress.

After our mutual rejoicings at being thus brought together, the first thing that occurred to us was, that a fine opportunity was furnished for superintending Martha's mental improvement. I soon found that the pupil had calculated on this even more than her teacher, and I was prepared to enter on the pleasing task with greater alacrity. No instructor ever had a fairer field to cultivate. There were no perversities of will, no vexations of temper to contend with; and her powers of mind, without being extraordinary, were good.

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The soil needed the hand of cultivation, and it would reward it bountifully.

As in husbandry the ruling principle is, to adapt the seed to the soil, so in education the great secret is, to accommodate the lessons to the dispositions and capacities of the pupil. Education cannot be carried to a successful issue, but as this principle is recognized and respected. If two young persons, the one with a searching understanding but dormant invention, the other with a luxuriant imagination but feeble judgment, are submitted to exactly the same process of education, it is obvious, that, whichever plan be adopted, it will, in *one case*, be rather an injury than a boon. The elements of knowledge may be given to two, to twenty, or, such are our mechanical improvements, to hundreds in class; but *education*, in the complete sense of the term—that education which consists in forming right principles, just tastes, and benevolent dispositions—can only be given by bringing the person taught into immediate and familiar contact

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with a teacher who has a penetrating eye to seize on the points of natural character, and a steady hand to prune what is excessive, and to nurse and strengthen what is feeble.

Into these simple views Martha was fully prepared to enter. She was just as ready to admit the weak parts of her character, and most desirous of adding to the means already used to fortify them. The object, of course, was to exercise, expand, and invigorate her mental powers, as distinguished from the affections of the heart. To accomplish this, it did not appear desirable or necessary, to bind down her attention to a dry and abstruse study which should answer this end *only*; it was rather wished to keep the mind actively engaged on those subjects, which, apart from the *discipline* they brought with them, would be useful to her in future life. The plan, therefore, was of the most simple character.

We began at the beginning. As an introduction, Martha read Watts' Improve-

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ment of the Mind twice over; and, as a text-book for her future studies, she made herself familiar with the contents and arrangement of Millard's Cyclopædia, with slight variations. She then went through Murray's Grammar, for which an abridgment had already prepared her, not merely committing its rules to memory, but understanding and applying them. With the grammar we united geography. The outline was supplied by Turner and Goldsmith; the detail by Pinkerton.

When these were made easy, she proceeded to history, and read, Prideaux's Connection of Sacred and Profane History; Rollin's Ancient History; selections from The Ancient Universal History on the Jewish, Grecian, and Roman Empires; accompanied with an Abridgment of Spence's Polymetis, and the occasional use of Bryant's Mythology. On modern history she studied Goldsmith's Abridgment of the History of England, with large selections from Rapin; Adolphus' History of the Reign of George III; Custance's Consti-

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tution of England; Robertson's History of Charles the Fifth; Russell's Modern Europe; with references to the Modern Universal History, and some historical articles in the Encyclopædia.

With history we soon associated natural philosophy. On this subject she studied Adams' Lectures; Rowning's Natural Philosophy; Parke's Chemical Catechism, and some articles in the Encyclopædia. To natural philosophy we attached natural history, and made use of an abridgment of Buffon in three volumes, with Durham's Physico and Astro-Theology.

To these succeeded philosophy, properly so called. The authors studied were, Enfield's History of Philosophy; Locke on the Understanding; Reid's Essays; Stewart's Philosophy of the Human Mind; Watts' Logic, &c.

In directing Martha's course of self-instruction, it was not designed to bring down her sensibilities to the present tone of her mind, but to raise her mind to a decided pre-eminence over her feelings.

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And while her thoughts, her judgment, and her memory were kept in exercise with evident advantage, there did not appear to be danger in cultivating those tastes which feed on whatever is beautiful or sublime in the works of man and of God. If, in the act of cultivation, those tastes should be strengthened, they would also be corrected, and would become more safe by being more discriminative. I fear, indeed, I must not say, that inclination gave no additional weight to this argument; for I could not willingly see her excluded from a world of rich and pure enjoyment. The effort was not to expel her from her paradise, but to extract the sting of that serpent which made it hazardous to dwell there.

Connected, therefore, with the course already specified, Martha read, Burke on the Sublime; Alison on Taste; Kaim's Elements, and Blair's Lectures, united with the unexceptionable productions of some of our best poets, the Essays of the Spectator, Rambler, and Idler, and a select

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few of that very small class of prose fictions which have a tendency, in the most attractive manner, to expose the fallacies of passion, to brace the mind to firmness and perseverance, and to acquaint us with the ensnarements and unhappiness of a most alluring world.

It cannot be supposed, that in these pursuits *religion* was forgotten. When Martha had made herself mistress of those religious treatises named in a former chapter, she continued her studies through this period, by reading successively, but perhaps not exactly in the following order: Paley's Natural Theology, and Moral and Political Philosophy; Butler's Analogy; Beattie on Truth; Gregory's Evidences; Gisborne's Duties of Men and Women; with some of the most valuable pieces of Witsius, Owen, Baxter, Watts, and Edwards. To these should be added, apart from the miscellaneous books of the day, by some of which she was much edified, Mosheim's Ecclesiastic History; and many volumes of religious Biography,

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a line of reading in which she found great pleasure.*

It is not to be concluded, that Martha always brought to these pursuits the same temper of mind. Sometimes, with an unexplored library before her, she would be tempted, in her eagerness to drink down all knowledge at once, to run promiscuously from book to book, without acquainting herself with any one of them. It was then necessary to remind her, that a superficial acquaintance with books is not knowledge; that there is no path to knowledge, but that of patient industry. Frequently, I repeated to her the maxim of Locke, that to learn much we must learn a little at a time, and learn it well; and as often the maxim of Lord Burleigh — that

* Martha's course of reading is here traced, because the writer knows the youthful and inquiring eye will pass over it with gratification; but, at the same time, he does not wish it to be considered altogether unexceptionable. Some books may not stand where he should now place them. Some works that are not named would be introduced; and a few of those which are named, require to be read with caution, and praised with qualification.

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to do any thing well, we must do one thing at the time.

Occasionally, this ardour would subside into discouragement. The new world opened to her sight, was so spacious and unwieldly, that she should never be able to traverse it—so much was to be done, it was in vain to attempt any thing; and she was sometimes in danger from the conviction, that she had too much to do, of really doing nothing. Generally, one kind word from her teacher would dissipate this depression; and her mind was fortified against its return, by making her sensible of her progress, and by assurances that, however small it may at first appear, it would be effectual if continued. That the world before her, like the material one we inhabit, was to be compassed by resolute perseverance, in adding one poor short step to another; and that those who had explored the most of it, were at least as remarkable for their irrepressible activity, as for their native genius.

It might sometimes occur, that Martha's

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attention would linger so long on a work which filled her imagination and interested her feelings, as to consume the time allotted to some drier study; but it admitted of an easy remedy. There was a tacit acknowledgment between us of Martha's deficiencies, and of the adaptation of her present pursuits to overcome them; and an exchange of looks was always sufficient to correct the irregularity. Her expression was that of gentle affection, and seemed to say, "Yes, brother, I thank you—I have been foolish; but I will avoid it in future."

These, however, were only exceptions from a general rule. Martha, on the whole, gave herself to these pursuits with an energy which surprised and delighted me; and which would have afforded greater surprise, had I then known how powerful an exercise of self-denial it involved. Her diligence was even greater than I was aware. Since her papers have fallen into my hands, I have met with several abridgments of books she perused beyond what I knew to exist, and which

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evince as much skill in the selections as industry in the performance. They are now sad memorials of a hand that slumbers in dust.

Altogether, these exercises were highly beneficial. They occupied her thoughts and fed her understanding. They refined her tastes, and gave her confidence in her own judgment. They raised the tone of her conversation, and spread abroad the concealed excellencies of her character. They multiplied her sources of gratification, and taught her to partake of them without injury—with abundant advantage. Her profiting, which appeared to all, became, in some degree, sensible to herself. She always referred to these studies, as, considering all the circumstances, fraught with singular and indefinite importance.

Lest it should be supposed, that Martha necessarily gave all her time to these attainments, I subjoin a table for the allotment of her hours at this period, which I have found in her memoranda. It will show how much may be done by a regular

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appropriation of a comparatively small portion of time to our object, and that Martha was conscientiously concerned to have all her time rightly occupied. It, of course, applies only to the time spent at home; we shall have occasion to see how it was devoted when abroad :—

"REDEEMING THE TIME.

Rise at six, when my health allows.

Read till family prayer.

Breakfast, eight o'clock.

Retire for private devotion.

Read a hymn and Scriptures in order.

Go to market.

Attend to domestic concerns, and work till twelve.

Read till one.

Work till two.

Dress—Dinner—Read till four.

Tea.

Read and work till eight.

Devotion.

Supper.

Family prayer.

Work and converse till retire."

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I find, in the same connexion, the following notices; and as they are congenial with the subject of this chapter, I introduce them :—

" Dr. Hartley advises his sister to seek cheerfulness in constant employment. Let me remember this.

" In the company of my superiors let me be generally silent, and ready to receive instruction, that I may be able to impart knowledge to my equals.

" Is my mind inactive? Let me read the lives of eminent young persons — mark their attainments in piety and knowledge —Blush!—And let not another day of my life pass away without having done something towards the cultivation of my understanding.—Am I disposed to be vain of a little knowledge? Let me go to the same school, and there learn, that I know nothing, and that in proportion as I know any thing as I ought to know it, I shall be humble."

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CHAPTER X.

DOMESTIC CHARACTER. 1812—13.

THE proper sphere of woman is so strongly delineated by a Divine finger, that it must be apparent to every eye which is not wilfully blind. Those who question or deny it, start aside from their orbit, and by their irregularities, give and receive a disastrous influence; while those who contentedly move in the circle assigned them, not only fulfil the pleasure of their Creator, but, in silence and without observation, like the moon in heaven, are shedding around them a refreshing sympathy that shall gladden many a heart, and a gentle light that shall guide and confirm many a hesitating footstep.

Martha, on her return home, had the

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domestic management of the household put entirely into her hands. This arrangement was made very much at my solicitation, as I was unwilling that her attention should be engrossed by mental pursuits, and very desirous that she should be trained to the exercise of those domestic virtues, which are indispensable to the excellence of female character. Hitherto, her thoughts had not been occupied in this direction; I had sometimes concluded, that she was indifferent to the "study of household good;" and it was with some anxiety that I paused to observe how she would occupy an untried situation.

It was with proportionate satisfaction, I saw her enter on the proposed duties with the greatest readiness of mind. Her attention, I found, had been lately brought to the subject of domestic economy, as a study of high importance to young females, by some admirable observations from the pen of Mrs. More. And now that the subject was fairly under her notice, her good

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sense at once suggested what was due to it, and what due to herself. She was moreover influenced, as I afterwards learnt, by the resolution she had formed of keeping herself fully employed. A *change* of engagement was necessary to accomplish this purpose, as the mind cannot dwell continuously, and always on the same object.

Having accepted of her new duties, Martha did not choose to meet them with petty expedients, planless bustle, and culpable ignorance. She had too much spirit to give occasion, to those who were to obey her orders, for questioning her competency to command; and too much conscience to permit herself to be a party in transactions, while her ignorance prevented her deciding on their equity or injustice. She determined to acquaint herself with whatever it was proper for her to know. She, therefore, thankfully received the lessons of experience which a kind parent could supply; carefully minuted any valuable hints which she could other-

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wise obtain; and as carefully read over a few select treatises on the subject, which might enlarge or confirm her information.

Martha's first concern was, to lay down a plan of expenditure adapted to her means, that she might not be embarrassed in the appropriation of her money. To accomplish this, she entered into calculations of the average expenses for the week, month, and quarter, taking care to keep within the line of possibility. She knew, therefore, how the expenses of a week would affect those of the year; and was not liable to be surprised, at the end of a considerable period, into arrears for which she had failed to provide.

Martha soon found that arithmetic is the handmaid of economy; and resolved to improve herself in this neglected branch of female education. Her daily duties insensibly assisted her in effecting this resolution. She kept a correct journal of her current expenses; preserved in order her bills of charges; and was prompt and punctual in settling with her tradesmen,

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that they might never be tempted to seek illegitimate profits. She took much pains to acquaint herself with the real value of things; and as a great means of realizing the object, she generally made her own purchases. It was a practice with her, not of option, but of uniform obligation, to satisfy herself of the quality and quantity of articles delivered before they were used; that what was an affair of *business*, might never become one of frequent and unwholesome suspicion.

It was soon ascertained by Martha, that comfort is not proportioned to expense; and, indeed, that often no two things are farther apart. Here then was room for skill and taste to operate; and so successfully were they employed, that I believe few young persons, with an equal cost, could have prepared a table of such pleasing and simple combinations, or could have given to a family habitation more of the air of comfort.

The detail of domestic service was made easy by being reduced to *order*. Every

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thing had its place: every event had its time; and each servant had her respective duties. Hurry was avoided by avoiding delay; confusion was prevented by observing rule. Something was always done, and with so little inconvenience, that one wondered when it was accomplished.

Martha endeavoured to support her authority with her servants, by reason and justice. She knew what could be done, and how it was to be effected. She did not, therefore, make impracticable demands; and she was aware when to praise and when to blame. She never allowed herself to be governed in her conduct towards them by humour or caprice. They could *calculate* on her approval or disapprobation, before it was expressed. It was never in their power to say, "My mistress is out of humour, and do what I will, I cannot please her;" a declaration which, if made with truth, will sap the basis of all authority.

If Martha, at this early age, scrupled to assert her authority in all its naked strict-

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ness, she more than supplied the deficiency by her steady conciliating kindness. With her servants she was not familiar, she was not distant; but uniformly discovered, without effort, a concern in their welfare. She read to them; she conversed with them; she assisted them in getting up any articles of apparel; she noticed any slight indisposition with sympathy; and gave many spontaneous proofs, such as a kind heart will often suggest, of her regard to their comfort. Her interest in their welfare, inspired them with a desire to please her; and the desire to please made even drudgery a lightsome burthen. She taught them to love her, and this taught them to love their duty.

In her utmost frugality, there was not a particle of niggardliness. Her economy was exercised on things, rather than persons; and she would go as far as fidelity to her trust would allow, in subduing ill-will and unthankfulness. She never grudged what was *necessary*, because she never permitted what was superfluous.

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Every thing was done "without envyings and without ostentation." She took a share cheerfully in entertaining visitors to the family; and her whole manner, rather than any set words, expressed "a kindly welcome," which put the heart at rest in her society.

Every important attainment is made progressively. It is scarcely necessary, therefore, to remark, that Martha did not make herself mistress of her arrangements by any sudden effort, or that she had in her progress to contend with numerous difficulties. Domestic comfort, more than any thing beside, springs from the happy organization of a surprising multitude of small parts. In a machine of so many, and such minute divisions, something will get wrong, and will threaten to interrupt the movement of the whole. Martha was made fully sensible of this; and observed upon it, with a truth which the best read in human nature will confirm, "That a number of small vexations always occur-

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ring, are more trying to the temper and resolution than one serious calamity."

In harmony with this just remark, I cannot avoid uttering a conviction, that those females who shun and dislike the duties of domestic life as *below* them, would really find, on candid inquiry, that they are *far above them*. That they have not a mind strong enough, or motives pure enough, to discharge them. The detail must be seen; but if it is exclusively seen, it will appear trivial, perhaps revolting; there must be mind enough to comprehend the *total*, and to perceive how it bears on human life and happiness. There must be a perseverance that will steadily travel to this result, and a patience that will endure the numerous petty interruptions to its progression.

Exalted *motive* is equally necessary to these duties. In the retirement of home there is nothing to feed vanity, and but little aliment for selfishness. The theatre is too small for display; and the spectators are too homely to afford excitation. There is

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much to be done that is not seen; and a thousand little provocations to be borne without sympathy, as they are too trifling to be repeated. If every thing moves well, it is, perhaps, without observation; if any thing fails, it is sure to be discovered; as a watch may go correctly the whole day unnoticed, but should it stop for five minutes, it will certainly be detected. It is evident, that a person who meets such engagements as these with no higher motives than vanity and self-love, will disregard and despise them. She will neither be happy nor bestow happiness. She may, by necessity, remain in the centre of her family; but her mind will be "not at home." She will be sighing and vapouring for some other pursuits, either worldly or religious, in which she can do something that shall be applauded, and can receive her applause from a larger circle of admirers.

If Martha's spirits were ever in danger of yielding to the discouragements of her domestic employ, she was supplied with

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an effectual remedy in her *benevolence*. She was not thinking of herself, but of others; and if, occasionally, her strength was exhausted, her mind chafed, and care was creeping over her countenance, she would instantly become herself again, under the cordial conviction, that she was promoting the comfort of those dearest to her. Their acknowledgment was an ample reward for her largest exertions. How often have I seen her features brightened with heartfelt joy, on receiving the caress of the father, the kind word of the mother, the approving glance of the brother, which expressed gratification in her attentions!

We are often more impressed by the *manner* of doing a thing, than by the act itself. And, after all that has been stated, it was rather by Martha's manner than her services, that her family were delighted. She did not "do her best," and then carelessly wait for its effect. She did not spread her table, and then depress its attendants with a saddened aspect, and ill-humoured complaint. She considered the

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hour of meals as the hour of recreation; and she was anxious to connect with it, higher gratification than the animal palate can partake. She looked to it as a season of pleasure, and she, therefore, met it with smiles. There was an interest and earnestness in her manner, which gave a charm to the simplest food, and the slightest attention. Nature had not, perhaps, given her that quick observation of trifling circumstances, on which so much of domestic urbanity and comfort depend; but benevolence more than supplied the deficiency; for love has a superior sight to sagacity. Her affectionate eye would run in a moment over the well-known features of her family, and catch as quickly their several expressions. An unerring sympathy would prompt her deportment. It would tell her when to speak, when to be silent. It suggested what attentions would be acceptable, and what oppressive. It would dwell on her countenance with most fascinating power; and would not fail to bring its object under its genial influence. Few,

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very few, knew so well how to heighten joy, or diminish grief; or have had such benevolent pleasure in reducing their knowledge to practice. It was difficult, if not impossible, to remain sad in her presence. The thought of her, in the mind of her family, was identified with cheerfulness; and I have often marked with surprise, how her influence would insensibly chase away anxiety and fatigue from the countenance, as the morning mist is dissipated by the smiling and gentle approach of the blessed light.

But the most pleasing recollections I have of this period, are connected with the winter's evening. Many a time, when the course of daily duty has been run, when the world, with its noise and turmoil, has been shut out, when the frugal repast has been shared, has Martha wheeled back the table, and pressed us to form our chairs round the lively fire, which she always took care to provide for us. This was her opportunity. In this magic circle there was no resisting her influence. She

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had often tried it, and as often found it successful. Frequently, in the consciousness of her power, as we settled down snugly in our seats, she would say, "There, now we are happy;" assured that if we were not already so, we were in the way to be so. And if she could once see her assertion confirmed by her winning kindness, she herself was more than happy —happy in bestowing, happy in receiving.

Conversation usually began with her, and always in the most easy, generally in the most playful, manner. When she had won attention, she had some anecdote to narrate, or some striking portion from an author to read, or some question to start, which had occurred to her in her day's pursuits. Frequently she would report to me her progress in the books she was studying; and this would often lead to discussions on their style, or their subject. Whether these discussions were serious or sportive, she was always intent on making them interesting to her parents; and wherever the conversations com-

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menced, they commonly ended in religion, an element in which we were all peculiarly at home.

If religion became the theme, it was not because the tone of conversation was sinking, but because it was rising above ordinary things. Religion did not depress our cheerfulness, it refined it. How often has the hour of "sweet domestic converse" been imperceptibly prolonged when this has been our subject! How often has it been dwelt upon, till life's tumult was forgotten, or heard only murmuring in the distance; 'till, alive to our present state of pilgrimage, we greeted each other as citizens of a better country; till our hopes blended with our meditations, and our meditations were lost amidst the harps, the joys, the society of that blessed world!

Then followed the evening hymn and the apostolic prayer—and the unanimous fervent, Amen. Then came the parting words, the kind wishes. Martha's heart always overflowed with them. The softness of her voice, the beaming of her eye,

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the gladness of her smile, the happiness of those hours, they are with me still—they will never depart!

The feeling attached to these enjoyments, and the value set upon those domestic attentions which have been briefly illustrated in this chapter, may, by those occupying the earlier period of youth, be considered somewhat overcharged. This, however, is not the *season* in which they are generally secure of a just estimate. In the first heyday of youth, when the heart is hurried with the anticipation of novel enjoyment, when the illusions of hope rest on every object, and promise a day without clouds, a life without fear, and pleasures without end, happiness cannot be recognized in the simple guise, the retiring habits, and quiet tenour of domestic life. It is only as these spells are broken by the rod of experience, as disappointment treads in the footsteps of hope, as vexation mingles with pleasure, as the bleak winds of worldly adversity chill and depress the undue ardour of the spirit, that it is dis-

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posed to return to those humble scenes which it had scorned. *Then* home is charming; and the tongue that knows no guile, and the heart that yearns with sympathy, and the thousand attentions, and thousand decencies, which flow through domestic life, all unpretending as they are, are sure to be rightly appreciated. Happy is he, who, in such a state of mind, can still find in the mother, the wife, the sister, these real consolations! thrice happy he, who, early taught to form a just estimate of happiness, has *always* drank of these peaceful waters, and has only found their sweetness increased by the bitter draughts which a vain and insincere world has forced upon him!

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CHAPTER XI.

DEVOTEDNESS. 1812—13.

No sooner had I accepted of a charge in London, than Martha determined on uniting herself to it; and on the third of January, 1812, she was admitted into my fold, and I became her pastor. The solemnity of the act, and the period of the year, caused her mind to revert, with peculiar seriousness, to her former exercises of dedication; and, giving herself again to the Lord, she gave herself to his people, desirous of continuing in the apostle's doctrine, in breaking of bread, in fellowship and in prayers.

Martha regarded this sacred connexion, as not merely bestowing privileges, but as imposing obligations. She thought of herself as of the least of all saints; yet she considered that the least and the poorest

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was possessed of some one talent; and that there was the same proportionate responsibility resting on the application of one talent as of many. She was aware too that her situation brought with it peculiar claims. She was not only a voluntary member of a Christian church, which had a right to demand of each member a devotedness to the common prosperity; she was the relative of its minister; and if she was previously intrusted with the talents of example and influence, she felt that they were now increased in their weight and value tenfold. She had been faithful over a few things; Providence now committed to her many; and it was her anxious desire so to keep and employ them as in the sight of her helper and her judge.

The instruction of the young first engaged Martha's attention; that labour of love in which she had always delighted. I was, at this time, organizing the Sabbath school, and she became a most valuable assistant. She conferred with me on the

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arrangement of the female department; awakened feeling towards the object as one of eminent importance; and proposed herself as a teacher. Her example was quickly emulated; and she became the centre of an excellent band of serious young persons, who were ready to communicate what they had freely received.

Not so much from the whispers of prudence, as from her characteristic humility, Martha resolved on taking the *youngest* class. To the interests of this class she cheerfully devoted herself. She kept a list of the children which composed it, with their addresses; and if any of them were absent without reason, she visited them. She carefully put down any simple questions or remarks which occurred to her, as suited to the capacity of her little charge; and she made a selection of tracts and books, for their perusal in the intervals of the Sabbath, which were lent to the children as rewards for attention and industry. In adopting such rewards, her eye was directed to the improvement of

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the parent through the child; and that she might be satisfied the means were adapted to the end, it was an established rule with her, not to lend any book which she had not read, and could not fully approve.

Martha was uniformly desirous, in these exercises, of preserving on her own mind, and of infusing into the minds of her children, the *spirit* of the day. She thought she had seen the Sabbath profaned, by giving too much of a secular character to the instructions and manœuvrings of the school. She governed her conduct by the *necessity* of the case. It was necessary that a child should read, that it might become acquainted with the Scriptures; and to read, it was needful to spell. To these, therefore, she confined herself; and if more, belonging to the elements of general education, was to be taught, it must be on a day, and with associations, less sacred. Over those common lessons which conscience approved, Martha sought to spread a religious character. It never appeared to herself or her children, that the prin-

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cipal end of their meeting was to read, or to spell, or to repeat; the acknowledged end which was pressed on the attention of the youngest was, to become acquainted with the Holy Scriptures; to keep holy, by the service of the school, and the worship of the sanctuary, the Sabbath-day; and to anticipate, by prayer and hope, that better and happier life, of which the Sabbath was both the emblem and the pledge. It has been for the want of such serious views, that many a child has learned to undervalue the Sabbath, in the very bosom of a Sunday school; and that many a teacher has lost that sanctity of feeling, which once put him at a distance from worldly and daily pursuits.

To the eye of a visitor, Martha would seem to have been benefitting twelve or twenty poor children. This would more than have satisfied her for her exertions; but in reality she was blessing ten times that number. Her spirit diffused itself through the room. Her young companions in the good work, copied her plans, and followed in her track. They would

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not be late, when she was punctual to the minute; they would not be harsh, when her manners were so affectionate; they would not be dilatory, while they were admonished by her persevering assiduities. Such was the efficacy of her gentle influence, that they all speedily became as one hand and one heart. The school became conspicuous for its order and improvement; and it yielded those rich and pleasant fruits which, as a method of instructing the poor of the land, it is adapted to produce beyond any other imagined plan.

There are, undoubtedly, existing plans which have more of ostentation and of promise about them; and it is well if we are not dazzled by them. The trained and officer-like master, who marshals his five hundred children with a word, or, if he please, with a nod, is a much more imposing figure, than the humble Sabbath school teacher, almost concealed in the midst of the dozen children which he is endeavouring to instruct; yet, on a close comparison, he may appear in better circumstances to answer

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the great purposes of education. In both cases a competent portion of knowledge may be given; but knowledge, although it is power, is a power in itself of dubious character. It may explode the whole fabric of civilized society; or it may consolidate, and heighten, and beautify it. To be a power as *safe* as it is great, it must be combined with *principle*. He who is the sole instructor of multitudes cannot hope, should he desire it, to effect this combination; while he who, in the centre of a few, with a serious mind, seeks to familiarize moral and religious truth to the consciences of his pupils, is making knowledge, valuable as it is, a secondary and subordinate thing to what is infinitely more valuable.

The field of benevolence enlarges as we advance upon it. Martha soon perceived that the labours of the Sabbath might be extended with advantage in some portion of the week. She therefore originated a working-school, which met on one afternoon in the week; and was to be composed of the poorer and elder children, as

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a reward for their regularity and attention. The design was, to employ them in making simple articles of dress, some of which they were to enjoy, and the remainder were to be given to the poor. While their fingers were thus engaged, an instructive book was read, or a conversation started, which had a tendency to illustrate some duty of domestic life, or impress on the mind the importance of the life to come. The children discovered their relish for this exercise by a most punctual and eager attendance; and the congregation so fully sympathized in the plan, that neither money nor materials were even wanting; and, in the end, all the children composing this school appeared in a uniform exterior dress, the mixed fruit of their industry and christian kindness.

This labour of love operated admirably beyond expectation. The working-school became a sort of honorary and beneficial appointment, to which the other children were aspiring by exertion and good beha-

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viour; while the senior children, which, from time to time composed it, were brought into closer and more endearing contact with their steadiest and kindest instructors. It was this intimate and personal intercourse which Martha always valued so greatly, as a means of promoting the ends of moral and religious education; and she was affectionately concerned to make the very best use of it. Frequently she would talk apart with the children on their respective failings or duties; many of them she encouraged to write to her, that their minds might be improved, and that she might have an opportunity of imparting the most important lessons in a less perishable form. And most of them, in turn, were trained to the work of benevolence by attending her to the habitations of sickness or of poverty.

It was delightful to see her, when the duties of the school were closed, going forth with one or two of her pupils, like an angel of mercy, in search of wretchedness, which she might remove or mitigate,

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Her children always bore some article of clothing which their own hands had formed, and which their own hands were to bestow, that the difficult lessons of charity might be nourished by sympathy and established by habit. Happy was she, if, in thus relieving existing distress, she could see the first young tear of generous compassion glisten in the eye which had never before dwelt on want or sorrow in which it was not concerned. And this happiness was often her's. Many a time to me has she spoken of these instances of kindly sensibility with correspondent feeling; and now her scholars, some of whom have arisen to maturity, and are walking in the truth, speak of these visits as making, more than any thing, a deep and favourable impression on their hearts.

The circle of her charitable ministrations still expanded. Her connexion with the Sabbath-school necessarily brought to her knowledge much of poverty and sickness; and her connexion with me and the congregation, which, from being greatly iden-

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tified with the port of London, is subject to trying and sudden reverses, gave her the opportunity of becoming acquainted with a yet greater proportion. The opportunity was well and gratefully employed. She was eager in ascertaining the existence of distress, and as forward in concerting measures for its relief.

The will is every thing. Martha had rather a fixed devotedness to the work of charity than ample means for its promotion; but it is surprising what this accomplished. It gave her energy to strike upon a multitude of devices for advancing the ease, comfort, and friendships of the poor, the sick, and the dying, which would not have occurred to any mind little affected by the object; and it supplied her with confidence in drawing upon the resources of others to assist her in their execution. Frequently, when I have seen her involved in these services, or exhausted by them, I have been disposed to say, "How much can be done if we have the will to do it! How much is to be done

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without money, or at small expense! How little do they do who merely give *money!* Their's is only a *fine* to the undeniable claims of charity—her's is the '*labour of love.*'" The example that is insensibly exciting such reflections as these, is as great a blessing to those who behold it, as to those who are the direct objects of its compassionate exertions.

These solitary visits to the habitations of mourning were decidedly her favourites. She met with her own sex, met with them alone, met with them in the season of helplessness, of want, perhaps of desertion. There was no eye from which modesty might teach her to shrink; no restraints thrown on her intercourse; no fear of having occupied ground which others might possess to more advantage; nothing to feed vanity, to produce observation, or create embarrassment. She felt herself at liberty to confer with the individual as a fellow-pilgrim through the wilderness of this life to another; as subject to the same fears and

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foes, the same wants and weaknesses, the same hopes and destinies. She entered entirely by sympathy into the state of the sufferer; and all her sensibilities were alive to do, to say something that might lighten the burthens she had to bear, or smooth the path she had to tread, or brighten those coming scenes which, to most of our race, are overhung with ominous and im penetrable gloom.

Even the act of blessing has its disappointments. Martha did not find all her efforts for the poor and afflicted successful. Some were indifferent; some were ungrateful; some were promising as the morning dew, but as deceitful too. These dispositions would distress her, but they never impeded her in her ardent course of benevolence. Neither gratitude nor success were the standard of her duty. She had learned of Him, who is kind to the evil and unthankful as well as the good and gentle. Unworthiness did not kindle her into anger; it melted her to pity. She looked on the subject of it as the more

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miserably diseased; and was under the greater concern to apply those remedies which alone can rectify the perverse mind, and heal the depraved heart.

These instances, however, were exceptions from a general rule. Martha confidently relied on Him who has said, our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, and the average of her success was beyond her expectations. Many a stubborn mind was softened by her kindliness, and many an ignorant one enlightened by her teachings. The withered heart was revived by the unction of her sympathy, and the deserted spirit comforted by the possession of her friendship. The orphan would clap his little hands for very gladness at sight of her; the widow's lorn heart would sing for joy at her coming, and the blessing of those who were ready to perish came upon her. I am happy that my memory supplies me with one or two illustrations of the good which she did, and the gratitude with which it was received.

Amongst the many persons visited by

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my sister, was an aged female, who had seen better days. She was now the inhabitant of a garret. She had survived her relatives and connexions, and was confined to her bed by a chronic disease, which required attentions she could neither find in friendship nor afford to obtain from hired hands. Happily, for many years she had lived under the influence of religious sentiment, and it furnished her with her only consolation. But she was of a social nature, and had much delighted in the exercises of public worship; and now she was not merely deprived of these privileges, her very hold on the notice and regard of humanity seemed feeble and precarious. Day after day passed over her, with scarcely any interruption to her solitude. The idea of her loneliness preyed upon her: she might want, and languish, and die alone! Her spirit yearned for some kind hand to help her, some christian voice to cheer.

What she desired she found in Martha, and was satisfied. She was visited once,

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and commonly twice in the week the short residue of her life. Attentions were paid to her bodily comfort; and her mind was relieved by expressing itself to a friend on those hopes to which it was so earnestly clinging. Martha soon formed a strong affection for this excellent person. Her contentment in penury; her patience in tribulation; her serene confidence in the prospect of death, were lessons which she valued, and which she was anxious to lay to heart. Her visits became quite a thing of anticipation; and, while conferring an invaluable good on the last days of an aged pilgrim, she felt herself to be rather receiving than bestowing benefit.

I had heard so much of this good lady, that I determined to visit her. I found her in a low, arched room, containing but few articles of furniture, which had nothing to commend them, except that they were clean and in their places. She herself was sitting on the skeleton of a bedstead, supported by pillows. She was evidently eighty years of age or upwards.

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Time had traced many a wrinkle on her countenance; but there was an expression of intelligence and good-nature shed over them. Her eye asked my name or my errand.

"My name," I said, "is Reed."

"What, sir!" she exclaimed, with a countenance glowing into pleasure, "do you belong to miss Reed?"

"Yes," I replied, glad to claim relationship with a name which excited such emotions, and amused at the quaintness of the expression, "I do belong to miss Reed."

"Sit down, sir—please to sit down." I took my seat beside her.

She was too happy for the moment to speak. "You seem," said I, willing to prolong conversation on a name so dear to us both, "very partial to miss Reed."

"I have reason to be, sir—I have reason. I was so lonely—I was, as David says, like a sparrow on the house-top; and it was fearful to think of having no one to care for one, let what would

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happen. But Providence sent miss Reed to me, and she brought other friends; and she is so kind and so considerate, you know, sir. Now I want for nothing; I have, as St. Paul says, all, and abound, sir."

"Want for nothing!" I thought to myself. "Here is an individual who has outlived her husband, her children, her friends; who is feeble with age, and uneasy with pain; whose pain and weakness are the harbingers of a dissolution which cannot be long postponed; who has sunk from better circumstances to humblest poverty; whose whole property would not provide her body with a decent passage to the grave; who says she wants for nothing. This is indeed religion!"

I looked on her with livelier interest. The happy contentment of her features confirmed the expression of her lips. On one side of her was a little waiter, bearing a glass of toast and water, and a cup of jelly; on the other side lay her well-worn Bible. "Yes," thought I, "excellent

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woman, you are right; you have all, and abound. The warm hand of sympathy supplies you with little niceties for the bodily appetite, and the book of God is your title-deed to a rich and everlasting inheritance. What could the mightiest, the wealthiest, enjoy more in your situation? We must all come to this! Though the universe were our own, a draught of water, a little sweetmeat, or something as simple and as common, will be all we could derive from it!"

I had a pleasing conversation with her, the impression of which is still on my mind, though the particulars have escaped my memory. I commended her to the Divine keeping, in an act of worship, and rose to leave her.

She pressed my hand, and acknowledged my attention; "and pray," said she, "give my best love to miss Reed; I can never forget her goodness: if I had a child of my own, she could not be kinder."

I left her, delighted with reflecting what an advantage and assistance a young

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minister derived from possessing such a sister.

The remaining instance arose to our notice by a paper which was presented on the Lord's day, intreating the prayers of the congregation in behalf of a family under peculiar distress. On the ensuing day, some inquiries were made, which ascertained the residence of this family; and Martha went to obtain the particulars.

She found the family the tenants of one room, which was dirty and miserable. The mother was sitting over a few dying coals, with several young children about her, without heart, apparently, to make the best of her own situation or their's The father lay in bed, with despondency on his countenance, and a nervous fever preying on his blood. It appeared, that he had been master of a merchant's vessel, but that, from the failure of the firm which employed him, he had lost his appointment. That, week after week, he had been applying for a fresh appointment, and had failed in procuring one. That, in this in-

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terval, it had been necessary to dispose of almost every decent article of furniture and clothing, till they wanted even these expedients to secure their daily bread. That, at length, suspense, disappointment, and the approach of absolute want, had overcome his spirits, and brought on his frame a debilitating and dangerous illness.

The family, at this time, were literally without bread, and incapable of seeking it. Martha took up their case with all the promptitude it demanded. She provided for the present calls of appetite; showed, through a considerable period, a thousand kind attentions, and succeeded in collecting a considerable sum, to assist the mother in commencing some little trade, while the father was seeking an engagement in his proper vocation.

But the difficulty of such an engagement was becoming greater; and the wife, instead of supporting her husband in his endeavours, fell into negligent and intemperate habits, and not only expended what had been charitably bestowed, but ran

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him into the embarrassments of debt. At last, however, he obtained an actual appointment to a vessel, and his prospects brightened. But an individual, who had expected this nomination, wreaked his disappointment on this innocent man, by inducing a creditor to arrest him for about twenty pounds, and he was thrown into the ——— of the Borough.

I heard of his imprisonment, and went to see him. The poor man was almost desperate. He had looked to his appointment as the only means of redeeming himself and family from wretchedness, and now it appeared to be lost as soon as gained. The high charges for most miserable accommodations in this prison, by increasing his debt, made his escape every day more impossible; the promises which had been made to him, and which had been broken; the cruelty of a creditor, who cut him off from an opportunity of making payment; the treachery of a professed friend, who would throw him out of a situation with the hope of getting

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in; the want of confidence in his wife, and the misery of his children; seemed to have alienated his mind from human sympathy, and to have rendered him an outcast from mankind.

I endeavoured to meliorate his views, and assuage his feelings, by reminding him of what the afflicted are so apt to forget, that we must not judge unfavourably of all men from the unkindness and infidelity of a few, or even of many. He received the observation in silence. I thought if I could refer to particular instances it would more affect him.

I remarked, "You found many friends when you were in our neighbourhood."

"Oh, yes, sir," he replied, "many."

"And you remember the kind attentions of a relative of mine to your family?"

"Miss Reed, sir! miss Reed!" he exclaimed, with more animation and a quickened voice. "Oh, yes, she was a friend indeed; I can never forget when first she came into our room; she was sent from heaven to save us!"

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He became more free and composed. I endeavoured to present him with the religious grounds of consolation which were adapted to his trying circumstances, and to direct his mind calmly to the means most likely to effect his liberation.

I left him, rejoicing afresh in that beloved relative, whose very name seemed to charm away the demon of desperation from the heart of man, and to restore the alien to his inheritance in the sympathies and hopes of the great human family.

But these recollections, pleasing as they are to me, will not of themselves do justice to the benevolence of Martha's character. Her affections were not localized: they were not influenced by place or party, by name or kindred, by colour or clime. The emotions of her heart, like the circles from the centre of a fountain, were strongest nearest home; but they expanded freely to the utmost boundary of human sympathy. Man was her neighbour, her brother, her father; she could

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not be indifferent to his welfare, though oceans rolled, or empires rose, between them.

She looked at man through those lights which Scripture supplies — as endowed with capacities by which he might rise to Heaven, but as sinking down into sensuality, selfishness, and sin: as living without reliance on the Divine Providence, or submission to the Divine authority: as the framer of his own wretchedness, and as contributing to the wretchedness of all around him: as shedding the influence of his crime over the fair face of earth, and the fairer aspect of Heaven. She mingled her groans with those of "the whole creation," for the burthens and the bondage which sin has imposed; and she sincerely and deeply deplored the state of a world so full of the Creator's mercy, and so void of his praise!

Martha turned her eye from this heart-sickening sight, to dwell on the light and life of the Gospel. She contemplated it as rising above the accidents of human character, and the various forms of social

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and artificial life, and as admirably adapted, by its unity and simplicity of principle, to make its way to the wants of man as man, whether the inhabitant of Christendom or Barbary, of Iceland or Hindoostan. She dwelt often, and with sacred delight, on those prophecies and promises which are as highly poetical as they are strictly true and morally important, and which seem to pass over a slain world like the breath of the all-creating Spirit, for its renovation and recovery. In the visions of faith and imagination, she sought to forget the present disordered state of human existence while anticipating the glorious future. In the devout contemplation of this predicted period, she found every thing to fill and gratify the mind; a period in which friendship shall fear no treachery, kindness no ingratitude, simplicity no foe; a period which shall be as free from tears as from wretchedness, and from wretchedness as from sin; a period which shall bring with it a day without night, joy without alloy, and life without disease and without end. Then shall the heavens rest in their own

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eternal light and tranquillity, and the earth rejoice in their favour. Then shall the wilderness blossom as the rose, and the desert be as a land which the Lord hath blessed. Then shall princes rule in righteousness, and the people live in peace. Then shall names and denominations become the mere landmarks of geography or the lights of history, and no more designate the degrading antipathies of the human heart. Then mankind shall become one brotherhood; the world their one blest habitation; and God, the living Jehovah, their guide, their protector, their father!

Feeding on these blessed hopes, Martha was eminently thankful that she lived in the present day, a day in which so many things are moving forward simultaneously to one grand event. Her spirit went entirely with those divinely-originated societies, which, if not the dawn of a millennial day, were the bright and morning star which foretold its brilliant and quick approach. She, therefore, did her utmost by prayer, by contribution, and by in-

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fluence, to support their noble exertions; and she reposed in the conviction, that, earlier or later, by giving unity of aim and effort to the scattered energies of the good and godly, they would ultimately form one great moral power, which shall move and restore a fallen world to its lost orbit of light and glory.

Perhaps, however, the succeeding lines may be the best exposition of her feelings on this subject:—

THE MISSIONARY.

Blest be the man, whose heart expanding wide
With love of human kind, and fired with zeal,
Caught from the sacred cross, forsakes for this
His native land, and all his soul holds dear!
Blest be that pilgrim! Wheresoe'er he goes,
The barren desert smiles; the savage heart
Is melted into tenderness and love.
The captive exile, bounding from his chain,
Exults in liberty, and pours his praise
In lowly homage to the King of Heaven!
If aught I envy, it is not the crown,

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Bedeck'd with jewels on the monarch's brow;
'Tis not the laurel which the hero wears,
All steep'd in blood; nor, far surpassing these,
The meed of him, who, by the midnight oil,
Explores the depths of science, searches out
Nature's unfathom'd mine, intent to gain
His country's honour, and increase her stores.
Ah! 'tis the feelings of that man I crave,
Who spreads the triumphs of redeeming love;
Who listens to the heathen's melting song,
Himself the instrument of all their joy!
O happy man! already overpaid
For all his sacrifice, his care, his toil.
God, in the present life, vouchsafes him more
Than houses, lands, and friends, or all combined;
And, in the life to come, he shall receive——
But how can words express, or heart conceive,
What Providence reserves for those bless'd souls
Whom it delights to honour?—This we know—
He shall shine forth for ever as a star
Of no mean magnitude; and while he strays
Across the field of light, methinks his ear
Will oft be greeted by the welcome sound

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Of Father! Father!—O with what delight,
In lowliest attitude, will he present
These children of the day to God and Heaven,
And all that Heaven contains. Ye holy men,
Muse on this happiness, so pure, so high,
And be encouraged in your deeds of love!
Arise, ye sons of Albion, arise!
O be not prodigal of time! behold,
The day of your exertion closes fast,
And the still night advances. Myriads die
For lack of knowledge! Shall they thus expire,
Unwept, untaught, whilst you have pow'r to teach?
Shall they in anguish *die* ere you make known
The balm in Gilead—the Physician there?
Do ye, then, bear a Christian's hallow'd name,
And so forget to emulate the zeal
Of Him you worship?—O remember Him!
He left the courts of bliss, the highest heav'n,
And condescended, for our sakes, to dwell
In humble clay! A pilgrim, and unknown,
He was a man of sorrows, versed in grief,
A spectacle to angels and to men.
When did he shrink from trials? when complain?

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See, from the cradle to the cross he goes,
A weary way, rejected, and alone!
No covert for his head—no want supplied—
No friend to share his sorrows! Like a lamb
Led forth to slaughter and to death he goes!
But to the last—and e'en when Justice pours
The tide of wrath on his devoted head—
E'en then, and for his enemies, he prays!
Well, if ye will not rise to tell his love,
Sit still, and take your ease! But there will come
A time — not distant — when your hearts shall grieve,
Because ye went not up unto the help
Of the Most High!—But ah, ye will arise!
I see ye going forth like to a Host!—
There is a shout within the camp!—I hear
The Captain of Salvation call you on,
And not in vain the summons! Mighty grace
Has won your hearts, and fired them!— Your whole life
Shall henceforth bear the signature of Heaven;
For Christ you live, and in his cause you die.
Peace, peace be with you!—Holy men, go forth
Strong in the Lord, rejoicing in his might.

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O faint not, ye his husbandmen, who plant
The harden'd soil! The sun, the rain are His!
He will command the blessing! When you lie
Forgotten in the dust the seed will spring
Thirty, and sixty, and a hundred fold.
'Tis for the generations yet unborn
To bless your labours, and repay the toil;
Your monument, their hearts—their lives, your praise!
God will himself be with you, even *He*,
Who speaks, and it is done! Yes, He will try
Your graces, to confirm them. You may feel
His searching hand within your very hearts;
The gourd in which you boast, he too may smite;
But his own love He will not take away;
Nor shall his promise fail: for He hath said,
The word of life shall not return again
Unblest by Him who sent it. He will work—
And *who* shall let? The kingdoms are the Lord's!
The universe his temple! Distant lands,
With one accord, shall celebrate his praise!
The Jew shall worship, and Messiah reign
The King of kings, the everlasting King!

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CHAPTER XII.

DISCRETION. 1812—13.

"THERE are some members of a community," said the sagacious and witty Thomas Bradbury, "that are like a crumb in the throat: if they go the *right way*, they afford but little nourishment; but if they happen to go the *wrong way*, they give a great deal of trouble." There are others, it may be added, who have the inclination and ability to do much good, who yet, by their rashness or ill-humour, produce such a fearful proportion of mischief, as to make it at least doubtful, whether we are better with or without their exertions. Those are the truly estimable characters in every community of every scale, who, in doing good, do no evil; who have energy, but whose energy is reined and regulated by discretion.

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Martha, as the sister of an unmarried minister, became a centre to the female portion of a considerable congregation. This was a situation of usefulness, but it was also one of difficulty; and, at her age, and with her susceptibilities, it was not so surprising, that she should be zealous to do good herself, and promote good works in others, as that her zeal should be attempered by prudence, and according to knowledge. Yet, this excellence was her's in a high degree. She was the friend of the young, the comforter of the aged, a favourite with all. The fresh and kindly impressions formed by her first introduction to new connexions, were never effaced; they were improved and strengthened by increasing intercourse. It may be said of her, through the whole term of her communion, with a circle made up of such different ages, habits, and tempers, that she never lost a friend or made an enemy. Now, though undoubtedly friends may be lost, and enemies formed, not only without the fault, but by the very excellencies of an individual; yet, in the absence of these

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evils, there may surely be found a presumptive argument in favour of discreet deportment. As no subject enters more completely into the happiness of every-day existence, it may be profitable to descend to particulars.

Martha was guided in forming her friendships by *the perception of real piety*. This arose not merely from a persuasion, that the heart which is not true to God could not be true to her; but chiefly from her inability to participate in a mutual sympathy where piety was wanting. Pious herself, she could not have free and intimate communion with those who were otherwise minded. With all her young companions she was kind, courteous, and communicative, hoping to win them to better thoughts and feelings; but it was only with those who were under a powerful religious influence, that she could feel entirely happy, because they only were prepared to understand and value the predominant desires, hopes, and fears of her spirit.

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In other society, too, she was jealous of her safety. She had seen many hopeful young characters fatally blighted by vain, trifling, ill-chosen companions; and she had too lowly an opinion of herself to suppose that she might stand securely where others had fallen. She always considered that, with such persons, there was even more likelihood of her receiving an injury, than bestowing a benefit; and this made her circumspect over herself in the very act of doing good to others, while she sought repose only on the bosom of those who, with herself, were seeking rest, and exercising confidence beneath the shadow of the Almighty's wings.

Martha always entered into society *with the serious desire of promoting her own and others' improvement.* Friendship with her was not a selfish compact, by which she sought the gratification of selfish passions, without pausing to inquire, whether it was right or delicate to do so; it was a talent put into her hand, which was to be justly appreciated and

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eternal light and tranquillity, and the earth rejoice in their favour. Then shall the wilderness blossom as the rose, and the desert be as a land which the Lord hath blessed. Then shall princes rule in righteousness, and the people live in peace. Then shall names and denominations become the mere landmarks of geography or the lights of history, and no more designate the degrading antipathies of the human heart. Then mankind shall become one brotherhood; the world their one blest habitation; and God, the living Jehovah, their guide, their protector, their father!

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reverence and love of religion was rather perceived in the temper with which she treated of common and temporal things, than by any wordy declarations of its pre-eminent excellence.

She was *slow to take offence*. She never made a friend an offender for a hasty word, or a dubious expression of countenance or conduct. She was not ready to misconstrue motive, or to watch for the frailties of others. She was sensible of the variations of friendly feeling; but she did not allow herself to be governed by them. Trifles light as air were never allowed to come between her and her companions; to distress her by feverish jealousies, and her friend by endless explanations. She looked, not to the single word, or look, or act, but to the uniform character; she dwelt, not on the momentary feeling, which the individual might regret as deeply as herself; she considered the acknowledged and ruling principles of conduct. She always put the best construction on doubtful actions; and became

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the apologist of an accused party, where it was not evident that the conduct had been *intentionally* and *morally wrong*. So far as she was personally concerned, it may truly be said, that she never took offence, except where offence was intended; and then, while she retired from one who was unfit for friendship, it was done with reluctance and pity, not with resentment.

If cause for offence arose, as more or less it will, Martha always sought a *prompt and candid explanation*. If, on the one hand, she did not permit her friendship to be affected by those infirmities which are discovered by the best and wisest; on the other hand, she would not allow her affections to canker and decline under wounds which, though not acknowledged, were deeply felt. If she could conquer an unfavourable impression, she did; if she could not, she revealed her thoughts to her friend. In this delicate act, she was entirely governed by the scriptural directions — she spoke to the

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person concerned—alone—and *in confidence.* Her opinion of the impropriety of another, never reached the individual second hand; she never debilitated the best motives to candid acknowledgment, by exposing the wrong before witnesses; and the party knew that what was said, would not be afterwards ungenerously repeated to uninterested auditors.

In these exercises of the heart, the *spirit* was in harmony with the act itself. It was most kind, and meek, and modest. She was the most gentle of reprovers. If ever any had occasion feelingly to adopt the words of the Psalmist on the subject, it must have been those who received admonition from her lips: — "Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, and it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head."

Scarcely need it be remarked, that such a person *was ready, most ready, to forgive.* She not only expressed herself to be so, but she took care to throw no obstacles in

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the way of acknowledgment, when it was necessary. There was no assumption—no sense of superiority—no supposed licence to tell a friend a thousand unwelcome truths. She prescribed no terms—insisted on no severe and humbling conditions. She never put the high-minded question, "How many times a day shall I forgive my brother?" She disliked the very name of forgiveness, as it necessarily involved somewhat of superiority. But with the name almost never on her lips, the disposition was always awake in her heart; and, had occasion required it, she could have as readily exercised it seventy as seven times a day. It was invariably enough, if the conduct or expression *implied* sorrow, without the formal utterance of it; and even in such indications, she was so sincerely distressed, that it would have been difficult to ascertain from appearances, who had done and who received an injury.

The act of forgiveness was as *complete* as it was delicate. She allowed no subsequent event to revive any thing which

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had been submitted to explanation, and on which she had expressed satisfaction. She could not always act up to the letter of the maxim, "forgive and forget;" but she did more, she conformed to its *spirit*. She strove not to remember; and she never suffered what might remain on her memory to influence her temper, or to become matter of allusion, in any present misunderstanding.

Where character was at all concerned, it was a rule with Martha *not to listen to rumour and report*. She knew that Rumour had a hundred tongues, and that at least fifty of them were false. Character with her was a sacred thing, and she could not allow herself to alter the good opinion she had formed of any one, without the strongest and best established reasons. She knew that many actions could not be judged of rightly without knowing more than she could possibly know of attending circumstances; and that envy and malignity were ever too ready to give a colouring to such actions, till what was innocent ap-

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peared to be inconsistent; and what was merely inconsistent, to be sinful. She shrunk from the whisperer, the tale-bearer, the slanderer, and the flatterer, as from beings unfit for friendship, and most injurious to social happiness and religious confidence. The hint, the insinuation, the proffered secret against the character of another, which contribute so much to begin or cement the friendships of half the world, were never well received by her; and those who offered them were pitied for a meanness and degradation, of which they were too little conscious.

As she would not credit report, so *she would not assist its circulation,* even when too truly founded. She could find no pleasure in feeding on the defects of others; they were always seen with pain. If she might, she would close her eyes upon them; and happy was she if she could draw a veil over them from the eyes of others. It was a rule with her, that, if she could say no good of an individual, she would not unnecessarily speak evil. She also

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admired the rule of Bishop Beveridge, which is as delicate as it is generous—"never to praise any one in his presence, nor to blame any one in his absence." That she might the more fully act upon these and similar maxims, she generally sought to converse rather of *things* than of *persons*—an excellent precaution, though less needed, perhaps, in her case than that of most other persons. No one offended less in word than she. I believe she never designedly uttered one sentence for which any human being was the worse. A considerable proof of this assertion is, that throughout a very extensive and entirely confidential correspondence, continued for many years, and treating of many persons and vicissitudes, there is not to be found one passionate, resentful, or uncharitable observation.

I cannot induce myself to bring these remarks to a close without making a brief quotation from her most intimate friend at this period. They apply not so much to her particular friendships as to her general

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acquaintances; and may serve to show, how far she was from limiting her anxieties and regard to a select and favourite few of her own age and sentiments.

"In your sister, even at the early age of sixteen, I noticed what I have found in very few of any age, or standing in the Christian profession—a tenderness of the character of others, and an affectionate manner of administering reproof when necessary.

"She would often observe to me, 'Some say that love is blind; but I think real love opens the eyes. If I love a person, I desire others to love her too. I am therefore apt to watch closely the conduct of my friend; and when I discover the appearance of any thing wrong, I wish it to be seen and avoided; for I consider that others, who know less of my friend's good qualities than I do, may not be disposed to put so favourable a construction on the opposite ones.'

"When sometimes noticing the impro-

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prieties of professing characters, she would feel most keenly on the subject, and would devise a number of little expedients by which they might be led to see their error, without putting them to needless pain and embarrassment. 'Many,' she would remark, 'do not know what they occasion the world to say of them and of religion. If we could let them know what others are so ready to say of them, I am sure they would alter their conduct. But wisdom and tenderness must be exercised, especially by young persons towards older ones, or we shall lose the end at which we were aiming, and dishonour Him whom we meant to serve. One thing we can *always* do—we can pray for them.'

"This act she was never backward to perform. I have often witnessed the fervour of her prayers for those who did not in all things adorn the doctrine of the Gospel. Whenever she heard an individual spoken against, however unknown to her, she was ever prepared to offer some supposition in favour of the accused; either

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'the party accusing might be misinformed,' or 'there might be many things in extenuation;' or, 'at least, it should be mentioned to the individual, that an opportunity might be given for explanation.'

"Sometimes she would take this duty upon herself, if others would not. Her concern was in this case to convince the parties that she had a sincere interest in their welfare, and a deep sense of their excellencies. 'Perhaps,' she would say, 'I am too scrupulous;' or 'I am not sufficiently acquainted with the motives which actuate you;' or 'I have been misinformed;' or 'I am really too young to be capable of forming a right judgment. But I was afraid that others might think the worse of you for it; and I should be grieved to hear any one speak of you with disrespect.'—She had often the joy of seeing that her efforts were not in vain; and even where the admonition was despised, I scarcely know an instance in which they were displeased with the admonisher"

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In the pursuit of this simple, but too unusual line of conduct, it is not to be told what good she effected, what evil she prevented; what fires of anger and ill-will she extinguished, which might otherwise have preyed on the comfort and harmony of many a household; what jealousies and envyings and heartburnings and strifes she contributed to destroy in the very birth, which otherwise might have lived to roam over the fair inclosures of civilized society, seeking whom they might devour. Those will best conceive of the effect of her quiet exertions who are best acquainted with human life, and have soberly considered, with the most reflective of men, "How great a matter a little fire kindleth." If the whisperer and the calumniator, those plausible but noxious reptiles in the garden of social intercourse, are able to "separate between chief friends," and to break up their mutual and happy connexions into two opposing and conflicting parties; what shall be said of the advan-

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tages conferred by the individual, who in one instance succeeds in neutralizing the poison which would work so disastrously, and, by a steady example, teaches others, less wary of the consequences, so to do?

In seeking to advance social happiness, Martha insensibly promoted her own. The blessing of the peace-maker came upon her. She was cherishing a habit most favourable to her own peace and enjoyment. By accustoming herself to dwell on what is bright, and generous, and pitiful, and kind in human life, she was preparing numerous and inexhaustible sources of satisfaction and delight; while those who habituate themselves to watch for what is bad in human character, and to feed on it with secret and envious appetite, are fostering a demon in their bosom, which shall eventually seal their eyes to the loveliness they would not see, and haunt their imaginations with pictures of evil, only evil, and evil continually!

Good arose to her, not simply from these acts of mental discipline; she ultimately

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found herself surrounded by friends, who reflected upon her something of her own kindly feeling. She was amiable, and therefore beloved; she was discreet, and therefore trusted; she was modest, and therefore praised; she was pious, and therefore esteemed. Indeed she had a remarkable power to excite and engage attachment; and was as remarkably successful in the use of it. There seemed to be nothing about her to awaken the fears of the jealous, or to agitate the bile of the malignant. The rough and the gentle, the sensitive and the reflective, all thought well of her, and spoke as they thought; and those who intimately knew her, had but one sentiment—it was the uniform, abiding, progressive sentiment of sincere affection.

It is of importance to remark, that the conduct in social life described throughout this chapter, was dictated rather by the *heart* than the *head*. Martha owed nothing in her friendships to artful policy, wordy professions, or violent protestations; yet she did not neglect the voice of sober

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judgment, or the maxims of tried prudence. On the contrary, she always deferred to them; she was in the habit of consulting the Proverbs of Solomon on her relative deportment; and she constantly spoke of them as unfolding invaluable principles of moral conduct, mixed with such rich and sagacious views of human nature, as to make them an indispensable manual to those, who would "cleanse their way" through a polluted and polluting world.

But it was the qualities of the heart which attracted the hearts of others toward her. And, so far as I can venture on distinguishing them, it was eminently effected by her *humility* and *love*.

Humility was not merely admitted to be a cardinal virtue in her creed; it was a disposition she diligently sought to cultivate; and it was the influence of this grace that produced so much of gentleness, candour, and forbearance. She always strove to think of others as better than herself; of herself as the least of all saints, and the

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most ungrateful of offenders. She could not be severe on the frailties of another, for she was frail. She could not declaim against the mote in a brother's eye, for a beam was in her own. She could not refuse to forgive her debtor his fifty pence, for she had been forgiven her five hundred; nor, though she was always offending, could she with confidence ask for pardon, but as she was prepared to pardon those who had trespassed against her.

Charity was the companion of her humility, and they reciprocally strengthened each other. This was indeed the paramount excellence of her character, and it subdued all things to itself. It had cast out fear, and enabled her "to lay aside all malice, and all pride and hypocrisy and envy, and all evil speaking," that she might have her conversation in the world in simplicity, and without offence. It never allowed her to wait, in her social intercourse, for the recurrence of the cold half-forgotten rule of conduct; it spontaneously suggested all that was forgiving,

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candid, and compassionate. The incomparable sketch of this grace in its excellence, nature, and importance, by the hand of the Apostle Paul, was with her a most favourite portion of scripture. It was, in fact, a *study* to her. If her charity was ever in danger of failing through manifold trials, she studied it, that the feeble grace might be confirmed; if she was ever subject to the world's ridicule for what it might consider the tameness of her spirit, she had recourse to it and was justified; and, at all times, her admiration of it would dispose her to dwell on this lovely picture with insatiable pleasure. Indeed she dwelt upon it, till she was greatly changed into the same image. She suffered long, and was kind; she envied not; she vaunted not herself, and was not puffed up. She did not behave herself unseemly; sought not her own; was not easily provoked; thought no evil; rejoiced not in iniquity, but rejoiced in the truth. She bore all things; believed all things; hoped all things; endured all things. She

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had faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these three was CHARITY.

It is easy to imagine, how well these admirable dispositions are adapted to work the effects which are here ascribed to them; how powerful they are in exciting esteem, conciliating affection, and creating influence—the influence of genuine goodness. Without these, the most acute sagacity will fail to weave the ties of a disinterested and imperishable friendship; and with them, and with little else, we shall find in our utmost need, if not many friends, at least some one friend, whose heart has answered to our heart, and who shall be as "a brother born for adversity, and a friend who loveth at all times."

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CHAPTER XIII.

TRIALS. 1812—13.

WHERE is the one point in human existence on which any child of Adam can place his finger, and say, Then I was happy? When the stream of life is gliding most pleasantly along, there will still be found some under current crossing its progress; and which, if not seen foaming on the surface, is too surely felt troubling its inward tranquillity.

The period on which we are pausing, might be considered a most happy one in the life of Martha. She was esteemed by her connexions, beloved by her friends, the delight of her relations; she dwelt amongst those she loved, and made them the happier by her presence; she was pursuing with success her own improvement, and

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promoting to her uttermost the good of others; she was free from what are usually denominated worldly cares, and living in blessed sympathy with things unseen and eternal: what, then, could now arise to give her uneasiness or vexation?

Apart from those sources of painful reflection which were previously open to her, she suffered much during this period, from an unexpected termination of her earliest and most intimate friendship. The intercourse was closed at the request of her parents; and that request originated in a conviction, that the two young friends were not exactly suited to each other.

In acting on such a conviction, it is scarcely necessary to say, that blame is not to be imputed to any one of the parties. It is readily understood, that two young persons may be of excellent character and principles, and yet not be so adapted to each other as to produce their common benefit and felicity. There may be a difference of age, or of temper, or of habit, or of taste; there may be too much suscep-

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tibility or too little; they may both run into one extreme, and so increase their mutual hazard, or they may run each to opposite extremes, and so chafe each other's dispositions. Any of these variations, trifling as they seem, may be so exercised as to render an intimacy injurious, which would otherwise be most advantageous. And it must be admitted, that, though parents may sometimes err in forming a judgment on these, they are, generally speaking, best qualified to make a candid and kind opinion; and that they are discharging some of their highest trusts to their offspring in interposing a mild authority, on the suggestions of their best and calmest discretion.

Supposing this measure to be as wise and salutary as it was meant to be, it did not affect Martha the less severely. It was her first friendship; and it was formed at a time when her susceptible heart knew no disappointment, was checked by no control; it had been cemented by a thousand mutual acts of love, of piety,

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and of confidence. No later friendship had power to weaken her interest in this original one; it stood out in her view as chief of them all. It was now also regarded with particular tenderness, as her friend was exposed to great relative afflictions. The idea of relinquishing her at all, was opposed to her earliest and strongest attachments; but the thought of appearing to give her up when she most needed the proofs of sympathy and fidelity, deeply wounded her generosity.

The difficulty of this sacrifice was not at all diminished by any perception of its propriety. For the present, Martha could not view the subject through the same medium as her parents; and the most, therefore, she could do, was, to obey a command the reason for which she could not rightly appreciate. This was a great trial to her submission, and she sustained it worthily, but not without very sore affliction. Throughout her correspondence nothing of the kind seems to have given her equal distress; while her dis-

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tress is unmixed with one word of complaint.

The keen edge of our sufferings is often given by our own hand. Martha thought she could not bring others to perceive how valuable this friendship was to her, and therefore she scarcely tried. Had she fully communicated the amount of her feelings on the subject, her parents, in balancing one thing against another, might have re-considered their decision; or had her attachment not been, as it undoubtedly was, excessive, she might have felt there was some weight in their conclusion; but as it was, she had to drink her cup in all its bitterness, while none but herself knew that it was so bitter. She afterwards reviewed the subject in truer and calmer lights, and employed the errors of her experience for the right conduct of others.

The spirit is frequently willing when the flesh is weak. Martha's mind readily submitted to the yoke of parental authority, but her physical powers were not so adequate to the effort. Those powers

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had been much shaken before, and this event once more unsettled them. It not only affected her by the real loss of an endeared friendship, but by its imaginary influence in strengthening her mind to endure other and secret sorrows. It was by this friendship alone that she could seek relief under those anxieties of the heart which, in defiance of her, would occasionally oppress her spirits; and in earlier days it had been eminently useful. She had insensibly weaned herself from making any allusions to the subject with her friend, on which she had forbidden herself to think; and probably had the opportunity for free intercourse been continued, it would not again have been so employed. But, such is the waywardness of human nature, immediately the opportunity appeared to be lost, it was imagined to be indispensable; the foolish heart, which, with liberty to speak, would have had nothing to tell, seemed ready to burst for utterance the moment utterance was denied.

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About this time I was going to C—— for a few weeks; and finding Martha more indisposed than usual, which we all ascribed to exertion rather than anxiety, I determined to separate her from her engagements by taking her with me. We again, therefore, started as fellow-travellers to a place which, I considered, was interesting to her only by pleasing associations.

When we are sincerely desirous of administering to the comfort of a friend, how little are we able! what we present as balm may work as poison! I was now unconsciously conveying my sister to a spot which, in any circumstances, must have awakened painful recollections, and which, in existing circumstances, was likely to nourish them in a dangerous degree: recollections which, had I known of their being, I should have sought to wither and eradicate.

However, we journeyed on, refreshed in our progress; and seeking, by a good word or a good book, to cast some profitable

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seed by the way. Martha was evidently out of spirits, but I considered they would improve daily. They, however, sensibly diminished as we approached towards our destination. She lost her pleasure in conversation; if it was continued, it was with a constraint the more visible to me, as I had seldom observed it. When she was not actually directing her look to me, the light of cheerfulness forsook her features, and they settled down into dejection. I was induced to think something pressed on her mind, and yet I could not imagine what; nor could I bring myself to put the question, lest she should be embarrassed in refusing a reply. My thoughts took the complexion of her's; and I became somewhat moody and silent.

When the clouds of heaven are predisposed to weep, the mere firing of a gun, or ringing of a bell, will supply the occasion. I happened to break one of our intervals of pensiveness, by making some remark on the uncertainty of human

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hopes. Martha made no answer; and on turning my eye upon her, I saw the big and heavy tears falling from her lids. As they were thus detected, she lost her motive for suppressing them, and they flowed long and freely.

A tear is sometimes the very best introduction we can have to a delicate subject. Martha found her tears had prepared me to hear of something of which I was ignorant; and she, therefore, hastened to unbosom herself of her secret. Every thing it was needful to know, in order to form a correct judgment, she told in brief and modest words; and then alluded to the anxieties and conflicts which had arisen from it, and the pain she had felt in not finding resolution to name it before.

"And why," I exclaimed, "did you not name this before?"

"Because I feared I should lose your good opinion—I feared you would despise me."

"Despise you!" I replied hastily; "no—I despise him who——"

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Her countenance checked my speech; no anger was visible there; and I felt I was in danger of wounding whom I desired to heal.

"And why," I continued, "did you consent to come with me to this place? We would have gone in another direction had I known it."

"I thought in your company I could bear it, and I wished to try. And so I can. It is all over now," said she, compressing the muscles of the face, and brushing away the pendant tear.

But the tears were rebuked too soon, and another, and another, and another came. Need I be ashamed to say, that mine too were started; and that we wept silently together on our solitary way.

The effect of this communication was altogether beneficial to my sister's mind. It provided vent to her feelings at a time when circumstances had made it peculiarly desirable; and it allowed her to communicate generally without fear or restraint.

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She had, now, no point of reserve, which insensibly fettered her intercourse on other subjects, lest they might unawares open a passage to it. Her spirit was free, her heart was open and at ease. She felt she had again one friend with whom she could confer, if conference should be necessary; and this destroyed the power of imagination on her mind. Strict and close as our intercourse had been, it became more dear and intimate than ever. Pruned and mortified in other directions, her affections seemed to gather more fondly round her brother; and the living and heartfelt intercourse of this short period, with the manifest complacency she had in it, are amongst those simple, but touching occurrences in the life of our friendships which are not to be forgotten.

For myself, I believe the very first impression on this disclosure was that of alarm. I could not in a moment look at the affair as a thing of months and years; I could not distinguish time. The danger of which I had just heard, I could hardly

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conceive of as past; it was like hearing of a friend's decease in some foreign land; one cannot at once think of it as occurring six months since. I had lived long enough too to observe many a young heart, too young and too confiding to suspect danger, entangled, abused, disappointed, and withering away, beneath the preying sense of unuttered wrong. I was aware, that if ever Martha were likely to prove weak in trial, it would be in such a one, from a disposition so guileless, affectionate, and almost impenetrable to any kind of suspicion. It had, therefore, been my desire to give more vigour to her mind by cultivation, that it might balance the strength of her affections, before she should be exposed to any of those snares which too surely await the unwary, from the hand of folly, of inconsideration, or of wickedness. What, then, was my surprise and misgiving, when I found she had been exposed to the very dangers I deprecated, while I thought her perfectly secure; and that she had been called to make her de-

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fence, all unprepared as I conceived her to be, for the conflict?

These emotions, however, were transitory, and gave place to those of wonder and admiration. I was now furnished with a true key to her deportment. I saw that she had been exposed to the very trials I most dreaded; that they had come on her in so specious a form as to authorize her hope and confidence; that she had suffered from them most severely; but that she had not been subdued or carried away by her distress. That alone she had struggled with the difficulty of her situation; that she had not sunk into selfish despondency, but looked round for the means of deliverance; and that she had actually adopted the best which wisdom itself could suggest. I perceived that those pursuits which I had considered as preventative, she was employing as remedial; and that, though temporary feeling would be excited, they were working to a most successful issue. And when I reflected, that all this was done alone, and in youth, and

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against warm passions, injured nerves, and occasional fits of depression; that she had resolutely preferred exercise and occupation to a seducing retirement and listless reverie; that she had listened to the claims of the understanding, and resisted the clamours of the heart; that she had overcome her own sorrows, and had exerted herself to mitigate and heal those of others; that, at the very time she was the life and joy of her family, her heart was often full unto breaking; and that from her cheerful labours of love she often retired to gather up her tears, and then returned to smile again benevolently on all around her; I was filled with admiration, and even with astonishment! It gave me new views of my sister's character. "Can it be possible?" I was ready to say. "Can there be such irrepressible energy with such tenderness of heart?" I was prepared to believe Martha might be trained to this, but could hardly conceive of it as already existing. Those only who have been enabled to bear up

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against the *ennui* of disappointed hope, the bitterness of deceived confidence, and the temptations of a wounded spirit to feed luxuriously and in solitude on its own griefs, and to do this in a steady course of disinterested exertions for the happiness of others, can rightly judge of the sacrifices that were made, or of the power necessary to make them.

But the lessons we learn in the school of affliction are generally quickly and well learned. The heart is softened, and it receives easily, and retains indelibly, the proposed impression. Martha had not merely been exposed to affliction, but to affliction of peculiar pungency and power. It had placed her in a most trying and critical situation; but a situation which was made subservient to her improvement. Her attention was carried more closely to herself; she watched the workings of her heart; she witnessed some of those tempestuous conflicts of passion which reveal, in a glance, more of the depths of human character than an age of common feeling. She saw

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her weakness, felt her danger, and detected more clearly her constitutional infirmities. She became more jealous of herself, and resolved to resist the pleadings of selfishness. She commenced the struggle; she persevered; and she was now rising from it not merely to comparative peace and security, but attended with the richest spoils of conquest.

There was an addition made to her *confidence*. She felt not as he who resolves to fight, but as he who returns from the battle won. Her armour had been tried, and it had been found adequate to her protection.—She was inspired with more of *independence*. She had leaned on herself, and had been deceived; had leaned on others, and they had failed her; and now, like some tender plants denied the support natural to them, her character shot out the more vigorously, and asked nourishment of the skies.—Her habits of *self-control* were exercised and strengthened. The sensibilities which she was tempted to indulge, and which she could scarcely

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think so dangerous as in fact they were, had appeared before her in new forms. She deeply felt the necessity of subduing and regulating them. The effort was made, and it was successful. It was the ascendancy of principle over passion. It brought with it, not only the good I am noticing, but gave a tone and colouring to the entire character.

The moment in which the claims of principle are triumphant over those of passion, is a point of time, in the history of character, the most interesting and auspicious. It contributes largely to the formation or settlement of the mind, and brings with it the elements of all that is good or exalted. Passion relaxes and enfeebles the spirit; principle braces and invigorates it. Passion is dark, stormy, and vexatious, like the troubled sea which cannot rest; principle, like the rocks of our shore, stands out the bulwark of the soul in the night of adversity. Passion is the voice of that old serpent, ever the most dangerous when most be-

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guiling; principle is the voice of God in the soul of man, calling him off from the enchantments of earth and sense to communion and confidence in Him, without whom the strongest are weak, and the best protected insecure, in the hour of trial!

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CHAPTER XIV.

PIETY. 1811—1814.

I CANNOT persuade myself to close a period so strikingly developing the moral energies of my sister's character, without distinctly remarking, that they were created and sustained by the influence of genuine piety. As religion had refined her mind and exalted her tastes in the day of peaceful enjoyment, so it had fortified her heart in the time of calamity. She was enabled to resolve on a line of conduct best adapted to her deliverance by the power of principle; and principle derived its existence and force from the higher power of godliness. Indeed, these two are inseparable; and there would be

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little necessity for insisting on their union, were it not that an attempt is constantly made to divide them, by many who would fain be thought to admire the offspring, while they repudiate the parent.

It is readily admitted, that, without the presence of piety, an individual might recover herself from similar circumstances of trial. The temptation might not fix on the peculiar weaknesses of her nature; and vanity, pride, resentment, or insensibility, might raise her above it; and she would be safe, till exposed to that ensnarement which better accorded with the special frailties of her nature. But Martha was assailed, at once, where she was weakest. There was no contrary reigning passion to oppose evil to the invading evil; and yet she overcame. Now, though a person may conquer some one sin, without giving any evidence of real piety, because that sin may be subdued by a stronger corruption; yet, if he is enabled to conquer his constitutional infirmities, and "easily besetting sins," he furnishes not merely

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proof, but the very highest proof, of piety. It is not one selfish propensity overcoming another. It is every selfish propensity, the mightiest and the dearest, vanquished and led captive by a principle above one's-self, and distinct from one's-self. This is *self-denial*; and this is the very essence of all religion.

Independently on what is possible, it is certain, in Martha's case, that the progress and triumph of principle is to be referred entirely to religious influence. This might be fairly inferred from every thing in her history and character; but it was also the subject of her frequent, explicit, and grateful acknowledgment. Religion gave her light to see the extent of her dangers; and courage to contend with them; and hope to anticipate brighter prospects; and benevolence to turn from her own anxieties, and interest herself in the good of others. Religion brought her feeble and erring spirit into communion with Deity, and taught her to lean on the arm of Omnipotence, to submit to the will of a wise and

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infinite Sovereignty, and to lay hold of that righteousness and those promises which are "unto all and upon all them that believe." She believed; and "this was the victory that overcame even her faith." "By faith," which is essentially a disposition to serve God, and trust in him under all circumstances, "she endured as seeing him who is invisible." By faith she waxed valiant in fight, and out of weakness was made strong. By faith she confessed she was not her own, but that she was bought with a price; and that it became her not to please herself, but to please Him who had graciously accomplished her redemption. And what is there may not be effected by such sentiments and principles, not merely acknowledged to be true, but framed in the heart as the motives of action?

If it is of importance to trace these victorious exercises of mind to the energy of real piety, it is, at least, of equal practical importance to inquire by what means piety itself was nourished to so much energy

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This inquiry will necessarily lead to a brief, but, it may be hoped, profitable notice of Martha's devotional habits, as they were particularly connected with this period, and generally with the previous and subsequent periods of her life.

Martha sought to cherish the work of personal piety by *frequent and secret prayer.* She knew whence every good thought and every holy desire proceeded; and that prayer was only applying for them at their proper source. If prayer was regarded as a medium of communicating her wants, it was likewise considered as an important means of grace, for the promotion of every devout affection. It brought her into audience with the Being she most revered and loved; and lifted her spirit above earthly anxieties. It sweetened her mercies, lightened her burthens, and sanctified to her the various allotments of life.

Apart from the share she had in domestic worship, she was accustomed to engage in prayer twice in the course of

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the day. Usually, these exercises were observed as early in the morning and evening as was compatible with other duties; that, in the one case, her first thought might be rightly engaged; and, in the other, her devotions might not be postponed to an hour in which the body and mind would be too fatigued and heavy properly to regard them. In these devotions, her prayers were not only mental, they were oral likewise; she chose to give a regular and distinct utterance to her desires, as she thought it assisted the clearness of her conceptions, and prevented her from running into a loose and careless manner in so solemn an engagement.

But, although Martha found it desirable to mark her devotions by time and form, her spirit was not limited by the one or the other. Prayer was not to her a cold duty, to which conscience occasionally drove her; it was not local, it was not verbal, it was not a painful and artificial act; it was the breath of her soul habitually and imperceptibly ascending towards Him

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who inspired it. It may be said of her as the Psalmist said of himself: she gave herself unto prayer. The spirit of prayer attended, and fed upon, every thing in which she was engaged. Seldom did she give away a tract, or relieve a want, or discharge a common duty without inward and almost unconscious prayer; and if serious engagements were before her, they were made the subject of especial supplication.

The life of piety and prayer was sustained by *reading and meditation.* The kind of reading adopted, was in harmony with the end proposed—it was strictly devotional. The Scriptures were read in their connexion; and their impression was supported by some of our best pieces of experimental divinity, and the biography of eminently pious persons.

This reading was digested and made effectual by meditation, an exercise in which she had great delight. It was conducted in the same spirit; and her reflections were not allowed to become discur-

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sive or speculative. She did not seek, at these seasons, to make fresh acquisitions to her knowledge; but to apply what she already knew with more force to her conscience, and to entertain it with greater warmth in her heart. Her thoughts dwelt, therefore, on the elements and first principles of divine truth; on her sinfulness and demerit; on her privileges and obligations; on the excellence of the Gospel, and the unspeakable love of her Redeemer; on the vanity of time, and the awfulness of an approaching eternity. That these and similar sentiments might never be absent from her, she usually charged her memory, at the opening of each day, with some short passages from an inspired or other writer, which accorded with them, as a motto for her thoughts in the intervals of occupation which might arise. She considered herself to have derived great advantage, and redeemed much time by this plan; and there can be no doubt that it contributed to save her from treating with levity, as many do, the first and

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simple lessons of religion, which, indeed, like our common and daily bread, are by far the most valuable portion of whatever knowledge we may afterwards attain.

Prayer and meditation were sustained by *self-examination*. She could not meditate without looking farther into her own heart; nor could she pray without the guilt of hypocrisy, unless she inquired into her present wants. More or less she habituated herself to this at the close of each day; she "communed with her own heart, and was still." She calmly reviewed the motives, the temper, the actions of the day, that she might make sincere confession, and exercise future watchfulness.

The object she endeavoured to keep distinctly before her in these examinations was, the *reality* and the *progress* of *personal piety*. She thought, that the temptation of the present time is to neglect it; that if our forefathers erred in preferring the enjoyments of the closet to the claims of the world, we were exposed to the more dangerous error of losing all relish

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for the quiet duties of retirement, in the excitement and bustle of our numerous public religious engagements. She, therefore, was jealous over herself; lest, in attempting to keep the vineyard of others, she should be found to have neglected her own.

To assist her in preventing all self-deception on this most vital subject, she formed her judgment of the state of piety from what it was in *retirement alone*. She considered, that all spiritual declensions began in the closet; and that, therefore, they might be earlier detected by seeking them there. She knew that, in social religious services, manifold considerations—novelty, taste, vanity, party-spirit, worldly interest—might create a factitious relish for them; but that in the closet, where the world was shut out, where there was no eye to see, no ear to listen, but God's, the heart was liable to no such deception. Whatever, therefore, might be the strength of her emotion, or the height of her joy in public engagements, she allowed them to

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plead nothing in favour of her real state of mind, if they left her to carry to her closet a heart cold and indifferent, without humility and without gratitude.

But, although Martha would not derive the test of her progress from her regard to the more social services of religion, she was far from undervaluing them; and her *devotedness to these public means of grace* must be named as contributing instrumentally to her advancement in piety. Indeed, her uniform and lively attachment to the ordinances of religion, was strikingly discovered in her whole deportment. I believe it may most truly be said, that throughout her Christian walk, she did not lose, by negligence, or the want of properly economizing her time, one opportunity of attending Divine worship, which she could consistently embrace. To go into the house of God, to mingle with the people of God, to worship the perfections of God, and to listen to the word of God, these were amongst her highest pleasures—pleasures which never cloyed—pleasures

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which increased the appetite for them by enjoyment.

The Sabbath was to her a delight; honourable, and she honoured it. She entered on it with an air of serene cheerfulness, which is not only compatible with, but the fruit of, seriousness. Every thing of a worldly nature that could be done previously to its arrival, was done; there was no bustle, no confusion, no needless provision for the flesh. In attending the public services of the day, it was a point with her—to be in time. She considered, that it was a duty she owed to herself, to her fellow-worshippers, and to the Being she professed to honour and worship; and that she might not fail in it, she generally arranged to arrive a few minutes before the service commenced, a practice which she often named as highly beneficial to herself.

Her manner and temper were equally exemplary. There was no irreverent posture, no vacant countenance, no eye wandering from pew to pew, person to person,

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and dress to dress. She did not attend these public exercises to see and be seen, or to hear and criticise, or to trifle and be amused. On entering the temple, she considered herself at once engaged with adorable and omniscient Deity, who had promised his presence to his humble worshippers; she was anxious to sit at the feet of her divine instructor, and to carry on a large and profitable commerce with the heavenly world.*

In this elevation of mind, the minister in word and doctrine was not slighted or forgotten; his office and character were appreciated as every faithful pastor would desire his charge to think of them. He was not in danger of being idolized as a no-

* These, and some subsequent remarks, might seem needless in connexion with such a character as the writer is describing, were it not that one is called, so frequently called, to observe habits grow on persons of acknowledged piety and conscientiousness, which disfigure their profession, and which, if they could rightly perceive, they would not in the least approve. The young should be strictly cautious of sliding imperceptibly into habits and compliancies which, if they should be harmless to themselves, are indecorous in the eyes of others.

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velty, and, finally, cast away as a worn-out toy. She did not look at him as a performer, nor listen to him as an orator. She wanted not to be delighted, but to be edified; not to be made acute, but to be made holy by his ministrations. She sought, by his offices, to be introduced to his Master; to be fed on the bread of life and the water of life; and to know more of the will of her Saviour in its testamentary bequests and sacred obligations. If the minister was proposing the same objects to himself, she "esteemed him very highly in love for his work's sake;" and in proportion as that work filled his heart and influenced his labours, she was concerned to confide in his instructions, to pray for his succour, to sympathise in his trials, and, by any means in her power, to promote his honour, comfort, and usefulness.

If such conduct as is here briefly specified, sprang from piety, it will be seen, by a reaction common to good and bad principles, it also greatly advanced the

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work of piety. If a loose and partial attendance on public ordinances has its advantages, what must be their influence when attended in the spirit and the punctuality now described? And one cannot avoid the reflection, that if every member of our congregations were thus to fill his *proper place*, in the *proper time*, and with a *becoming temper*, our assemblies would present a very different picture of order and quiet loveliness. One might hope then, that the spirit of solemnity would pervade our sanctuaries, and assist our devotions, at the footstool of the Eternal; and, that the spirit of conviction would more frequently seize the casual visiter, and constrain him "to fall down and worship God!"

Martha's pious dispositions were increased by her *constant endeavour to improve all events, so as to strengthen them.* To those who look for them, such events are commonly to be found. Martha, although her circumstances were happily appointed, was always meeting with some-

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thing which she thought might be consecrated to these purposes. If disappointment arose, she impressed on her mind the lessons of resignation; if success, she urged herself to additional gratitude. When eminent piety stood out before her, she tasked herself to copy it; and the evils she saw daily arising from unholy and ungoverned tempers, set her especially to watch over, and seek the subduction of, her own.

She was particularly affected during the period which it is my object to illustrate, by the evident declension of some young persons from the ways of godliness, of whom she had cherished the best expectations. They had started nearly with herself in the profession; they had run well; she had hoped to pass with them to the goal; but they were hindered; they were drawn aside by the ensnarements of error, or by the love of the present world. She was very deeply affected by such occurrences. She humbled herself on account of them, confessing that she was as

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liable to err and to fall, and praying not only for them, but for herself, that she might never be seduced by Satan or any of his devices, by the world or any thing that is in the world. Thus it was, that the failings of others promoted her dependance and security, as we see a man urged to a timely repair of his mansion from witnessing the ruinous effects of dilapidation in the dwelling of his neighbour.

In connexion with these remarks, it should be observed, that Martha sought the advance of piety in her heart, by the *jealous avoidance of whatever was injurious to its interests.* I speak not now of worldly amusements and worldly fellowship; these are forbidden; and the allusion is, not to what is expressly *forbidden,* but to what is *uncongenial and inexpedient.* And in judging of these qualities, she was not governed by the opinion of others so much as by her own experience. If any thing was found prejudicial to *her,* that was reason enough for avoiding it, though to others it should be wholesome and nutritive. Of course her judgment was

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called to pronounce on things innumerable as they arose; but it may be desirable to state, that she was convinced, from observing their effects on others, that *anger, levity, and Sabbath-day visiting; idle gossiping, wordy disputation,* and *party spirit; excess of foreign engagements,* and *a desultory occupation of time;* association with those who held their profession in a *formal* and *worldly spirit;* and the perusal of *books of light and trifling character, professedly moral,* but not in accordance with the *pure morality* of revelation; were eminently unfriendly to the exercise and growth of sterling piety, and had commonly led to serious defection from the paths of godliness.

Martha was not even content in shunning these; it was her concern to avoid whatever might *possibly* affect her, as she concluded these would. She never desired to occupy *debateable* ground, or to dwell on the borders of good and evil. That worldly question, How far may I go and be safe? never arose to her lips; she rather inquired, How far may I retire, and be

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consistent? She shunned the very appearance or shadow of evil. To resist her enemy, she fled from him, well knowing, that to parley was to be fascinated and overcome. Thus it was that the flame of piety lived and brightened in its own element, and was not rashly exposed to every counteracting influence. It was not the flower of the field unprotected from every rude foot or ravenous animal; it was the flower of the garden, hedged about with thorns, skreened from the biting blast, cherished by a watchful hand, and living under the most genial heat, and gentlest dews of Heaven.

Nor can this chapter be dismissed without observing, *that affliction was undoubtedly among the means which promoted the work of piety.* If Martha was supported beneath her afflictions of body and mind by the hand of piety, piety, in return, was advanced by her afflictions. Trial and suffering are to the spirit what exercise is to the corporal frame; none are healthy or vigorous without them. Af-

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fliction, of some class or other, is indispensable to our welfare in the present state; and the Christian is "chosen in affliction," preserved by affliction, purified by affliction, "perfected by suffering."

Martha was now becoming a powerful instance of the happy effects of sanctified affliction. It enabled her to form a juster estimate of life, of herself, and of all things. It called into early exercise her submission and patience. It gave increased energy to acts of faith, and reality to its existence. She had trusted in the Lord, and had been delivered; she had rested on Him, and had been supported; she had looked to Him, and had been enlightened; she had rejoiced in Him, and had been happy; and she now felt towards Him as a friend, who is not only believed to be faithful, but who has been tried, and *found to be so*. Prayer was the dearer, from its having so often given vent, and brought relief to, her sorrows; and meditation the more inviting, since it had frequently borne her on its wings above sublunary vexation. The

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world was the more vain, from her experience of its utter insufficiency in the hour of need; and Heaven the more charming, from its having stood in direct contrast with the deceitful and fleeting and shadowy forms of this present life. She could say emphatically, that "it was good for her that she had been afflicted." Tribulation had wrought patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope made her not ashamed, because the love of God was shed abroad on her heart by the Holy Ghost, which was given unto her.

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CHAPTER XV.

RELAXATION. 1814.

MARTHA returned with me from C—— to her home, very much at ease in her mind, and considerably invigorated in bodily health. She cheerfully renewed her attention to those pursuits which have been described, and continued, through this winter, the life and joy of her relatives and connexions.

But the flame of life and love burnt too ardently for the frail vessel which contained it. Amidst so many opportunities of showing kindness, of mitigating woe, and instructing ignorance, it was nearly impossible to prevent her doing too much, and, what is even more prejudicial to a weakly frame, sympathising too much.

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It was the only subject on which her family held a serious controversy with her, and often was it revived by the evening fire-side. Frequently she would see serious concern settle in her father's countenance on detecting her real exhaustion under assumed sprightliness, and, touched by it, would embrace him affectionately.

"Ah, my dear child," he would say, sighing, and returning the embrace, "this is wrong—very wrong!"

"Wrong, pa'!"

He would shake his head.

"I have been doing very little to-day, pa'—very little indeed. You know you say, it is better to *wear* out than to *rust* out."

"Yes, my love, *fairly to wear* out, but not to *tear* out."

"No, dear pa'; but one ought to do all one possibly can in a good cause, ought we not?" turning to her mother, whose warmth of devotedness she knew favourable to the reply she wished.

"Oh, do not make your appeal to me,"

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her mother would say playfully; "ask your brother."

"Ah, she will not ask me," her brother would remark.

"Yes, but indeed I will, brother! I know you think we ought to do all we can do."

"I think, with our good king, *that we ought never to do so much as we can.*"

"Brother!"

"I mean by it just what he did, that we are not to press our energies, either of body or mind, to the *very uttermost.* By doing *more* than our strength permits to-day, we shall do *less* than we might to-morrow. Besides, there is the danger of overstraining the *bow,* which may never recover its elasticity."

"And you remember," her father would continue, "what Mr. Romaine said, when he heard of the incessant preaching of Mr. Whitfield — 'I shall, perhaps, preach *more sermons,* only I shall be *longer about it.*"

Such conversations, however, did not

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produce all the conviction that was desirable. In youth, it is difficult to conceive of injury being done to the health till it is felt, and the blessing of health is seldom valued but in proportion as it is lost. Yet Martha did place restraints occasionally on herself, in compliance with the known desires of her friends, and under a sense of duty; but possibly when a *partial* relaxation was adopted, a *total* one was necessary, and her spirits uniformly rose above her strength. Added to this, her indifference to herself, the precariousness of life, her love to her Redeemer, and her concern to express it in labours of self-denial and benevolence towards his members on earth, formed in her so powerful a motive of action, as greatly to raise her above *temporal* considerations. Nothing is more difficult than, in the midst of much to be done, which it is most important to do, patiently to wait and to do but little, or even to do nothing, as Providence shall direct; and it is not strange if Martha was yet imperfect in the lesson.

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As Martha could not have all the rest from excitement necessary to the fragility of her health while in town, her friends often sought to accomplish the end by inducing her to change the scene occasionally. In pursuance of this plan, she went in the summer of this year to Broadstairs, with a young friend; and she received considerable benefit, from the comparative quiet it imposed on her. It must be termed *comparative only*, for the circumstance of being separated from those she most loved gave her uneasiness; and although in a place ever so strange, she could not be satisfied without seeking some opportunities of doing good. Those opportunities, in such a situation, might be few and small; but there might often be more real exhaustion of spirits in seeking them and not finding them, than in finding and improving them. Perhaps I cannot do better than to allow her to speak for herself.

"Wishing, my dear ——, to supply, as much as possible, our absence from each

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other, I mean to keep, more or less, a journal for you. After some suspense and disappointment, we left town for Margate. We slept at this place, and then went over to Broadstairs, where we have procured lodgings. Here we shall enjoy all the pleasures of the country and the sea, without the bustle and parade of the town. I need not say this is what pleases me."

"Went to Kingsgate and Reading-street, two small villages. It was a pleasant walk. I believe I have been to five villages this week, all of which are near either Ramsgate or Margate, and none of them has a Sunday-school! Oh, my dear, let every instance we see, either of activity or lukewarmness in others, stimulate us to renewed devotedness!

"I take up my pen under the influence of head-ache and low spirits, hoping to mitigate the one and remove the other. I feel much the absence from my friends. It is almost three weeks since I saw my dear brother; and though I see so little of you, I feel being at this distance. How

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strange that we should be so strongly attached to a state whose pleasures are mixed with pain. Let us look at those things which change not—perish not—with the using."

"I feel very poorly to-day. I should be glad of your company for half an hour; it would rouse my spirits. I suppose you are at C——, and enjoying, I hope, much temporal and spiritual good, and not only blessed yourself, but rendered a blessing to others. Never may we take a journey, pay a visit, or enter on a day, without asking, what we can do to show our love to the Saviour! And, that we may have it in our power to do all our circumstances will admit, never let us expend a *single penny* needlessly."

"Went last evening to Northdown, a small but pretty village. There are some sweet green lanes, which show the ocean at the end of them; it has a beautiful effect. The cottages are neat, and the gardens indicate industry and comfort. But there is no Sunday-school! The villagers were

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amusing themselves with rural sports; and it delighted me to see so many youths blooming with health and gaiety, and engaged in healthful recreations. I could not fail, however, to be deeply affected, that they were destitute of all instruction. I offered one a tract; he said 'I cannot read.' I offered it to another; but instead of accepting it, he pointed to a third lad, who, it was understood, could read it. How is it that Christians can let all these poor villagers grow up and live in ignorance!"

"*Nine o'clock.* Just returned from Deal.—When upon the swelling ocean in a little boat, what helpless creatures we seem! I thought I understood more than ever the force of that beautiful expression, 'He holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand.' But after the sacred writers have employed the boldest figures, and we have formed the noblest conceptions of which we are capable, how very short they fall of what they ere long shall be! When the spirit is relieved of

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its encumbrances, it will possess in a moment more consistent views of the divine Majesty than in all the efforts of this mortal life!

"Went this evening to meet Miss P. at St. Peter's. Walked about the churchyard, and thought on that solemn period which my own feelings, and the ground over which I was treading, united to bring to my remembrance."

"My appetite is more than good, and this evening I feel uncommonly well. I walked to Northdown. The fields we passed through seem to invite the husbandman to reap the fruits of his labour, and in some places he has accepted the invitation. When last in the country I saw them sowing the seed. How very soon will the great harvest come! Who can view such scenes as these, and not raise the eye of gratitude to that Being who fills the mouths of his creatures with food, and their hearts with gladness! O how insensible is man!—how insensible am I! Awake my soul, and bless Him

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who sends his early and latter rain, and causes his sun to shine on the earth. Remember too, that these blessings are conferred on sinners; and that if God so care for the body of his unworthy creatures, he will much more grant to our prayers all spiritual mercies!"

"I hope in spending a few moments with you to compose my mind. I received a letter to-day containing unpleasant news; I afterwards read a portion of history which painfully affected me; and just as I laid down my book, a trifling circumstance arose which hurt me. O for that meekness which is of great price! How often a trifle reveals to us much of ourselves! My feelings need constantly to be controlled. This I consider my weakest part; they too often sway my judgment, when my judgment ought to sway them. This lays me open to many snares. It is something to discover where we are most likely to be surprised by the enemy; but this is of little use, except we take care to keep those passes well

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guarded. Let us, my dear, *study ourselves.* This will afford us fresh matter for prayer, especially let us look to the strong for strength on the *first rise* of an improper feeling, and cease not to crave his Holy Spirit to subdue every thing that is contrary to the divine image."

"After tea we walked to Pagwell Bay. There is a very extensive opening both by sea and land. The valleys, the hills, the waters, rejoiced together. I was so delighted with the beauty of this scenery, gilded with the setting sun, that I could scarcely take my eyes from it; but it was soon hidden by the shades of night. If this world is so lovely, what must the next be! And if the next is so glorious, what must the Creator be!

'These are thy works, Parent of good,
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair—Thyself how wondrous then!'

"It is the contemplation of this wondrous and infinite Being which will be the employment of a future state. Let us, then,

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habituate ourselves to the exercise; and that our weak sight may not be oppressed by the majesty of the object, let us behold it in the face of Jesus Christ.

"The quietness and leisure I now enjoy are calculated to promote my self-knowledge and mental improvement. I am bending all my attention to history; it is a profitable study. How astonishing it is that young persons should be tempted to waste their time in useless accomplishments, and often in vulgar decorations of the body, and entirely neglect the cultivation of the mind, not to say the salvation of the soul.

"I have only a day or two longer to stay. It is natural to ask, what good have I done since I came here? I wish I could return a proper answer to this question. I am very anxious to return, under the blessing of Jehovah, that I may prove a blessing to my family and the church of God. *I must make up lost time.* Soon the scene of action will be past. O that

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I could always act for eternity! The very colour of my apparel teaches me not to depend on earth, and yet I am always prone to do it."

The remainder of this year passed away without any occurrence of importance, except the change of family residence. Her parents, after long, industrious, and honourable exertions in their secular engagements, were induced to seek the comforts of retirement for their advancing years. Providence had kindly put the means of realising their desires within their power; and they now determined to use them.

Nothing could more fully accord with Martha's wishes, as far as her parents were concerned. She had seen, and with no careless eye, the labours they had endured, the sacrifices they had made, for their beloved family; and she was far from willing that these should be unnecessariy continued, for the sake of accumulating

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superfluous gains. One of the simplest and strongest wishes of her heart was, to see them enjoy the fruit of their exertions, exchanging worldly bustle for peaceful content, bodily fatigue for quiet repose, and earthly care for the calm anticipation of a heavenly state. Her parents were quickened in their steps by the affectionate desires of their children; and, before the autumn expired, they removed to a comfortable habitation on Bethnal Green.

Light and shade are mingled in every scene of life. Delightful as this arrangement was to Martha's filial affections, it was attended by regret, for it involved a separation of the family. Her brother could not be included in it. It gave her deep concern to be put at a comparative distance from one whom she now knew so intimately, and around whom her fondest reliances were clustering. However, we were not unmindful of the privilege already enjoyed in the three happy

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years we had spent beneath the same roof; and our present separation was of such a nature as not to forbid our seeing more or less of each other, most days of every week.

END OF VOL. I.

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